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OF THE
FIRST FRENCH REPUBLIC

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FIRST FRENCH REPUBLIC
AND THE RISE OF THE MARSHALS
OF NAPOLEON I

THE ARMÉES DE LA MOSELLE, DU RHIN, DE
SAMBRE-ET-MEUSE, DE RHIN-ET-MOSELLE

By the late
COLONEL RAMSAY WESTON PHIPPS
formerly of the Royal Artillery

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PREFACE

THE first volume of my father's work on the Armies of the French Republic, considered as the schools of Napoleon's Marshals, was published three years ago.¹ It contained an Introduction to the subject, and the history of the Armée du Nord.

The reception of this book by historians and military critics has encouraged me to take the next step, and to publish the present volume, which deals with the armies on the north-eastern frontier of France from the commencement of hostilities to the Peace of Campo Formio.

My father's object was to show how the training that the future Marshals received in the early years of the war varied with the theatre in which they served and with the character of the particular army to which they belonged. It was therefore necessary for him to take each army, or group of armies, in succession, and to deal with it in considerable detail. To combine in one continuous account, year by year, the history of all the campaigns waged by the Republic would have produced, both for author and for reader, far greater difficulties than any that will be met herein. My father acknowledged that his own system has inconveniences.² For instance, soon after the commencement of the present volume we have to return to the Valmy campaign, already described in the Armée du Nord's history, in order that the share in it of the Armée du Centre may fit in its proper place. Thereafter, however, the reader will be able to follow with no serious break the fortunes of two groups of famous men up to the cessation of hostilities in 1797. In the first group are Jourdan (whom we pick up where we left him

¹ *The Armies of the First French Republic, and the Rise of the Marshals of Napoleon I*, by the late Colonel R. W. Phipps, formerly of the Royal Artillery. Oxford University Press; London, Humphrey Milford, 1926.

² *Ibid.*, 127.

in the Armée du Nord), Lefebvre, Bernadotte, Soult, Ney, and Mortier; of others that did not become Marshals we have Hoche, Kléber, and Marceau. The second group includes Saint-Cyr, Davout, and Oudinot, with Pichegru, Moreau, and Desaix.

Soon after the *coup d'état* of Fructidor 1797 the history of these armies comes to an end, and the members of the two groups are scattered. The *coup* affected the careers of some, but Fructidor closes a very definite period in the life of the Republic, and involves other future Marshals and other armies, whose histories have yet to be told. If, therefore, I find it possible to continue the publication of my father's work, the next volume should contain his histories of the armies on the southern frontiers and in La Vendée, and should end with his account of Fructidor. There would still remain a mass of unpublished material, covering the armies of 1798-9, the *coup d'état* of Brumaire 1799, and the armies of the Consulate. Of most of the campaigns that come under these heads there is no English account, and, after careful study of my father's papers, I cannot doubt that, if it should not be possible to publish them, the loss to the military historian will be a real one.

CHARLES F. PHIPPS,
Colonel late R.A.

COLLINGDON,
CRANLEIGH,
April, 1929.

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were hardly responsible and by which, first the conquests across the Rhine, and then Mayence, were lost, but the tide turned with the relief of Landau. It was perhaps here that the new armies of France first learnt the secret of their power and teased and worried the enemy into exhaustion and retreat, rather than conquered him in the open field. Their action was very important, for, heading at right angles to the line of advance on Paris, they kept a large force of the Allies from penetrating into the country, even in their retreats tempting their opponents south instead of west, and the more easily as the Austrians were influenced by dreams of a reconquest of Alsace for their own profit.

One interesting side of the struggle is that it was in this theatre of war that the new army first met what we may call the regular army of the *émigrés*, as contrasted with the volunteers that fought for the Bourbons in La Vendée. Altogether the *émigrés* furnished some 19,000 or 20,000 men, of whom the Duc de Bourbon had 4,000 or 5,000 in the Netherlands; 10,000 were with the Princes serving under Brunswick; and here, alongside of the Austrians, the Prince de Condé had 4,854 men, the first body to come into real battle with the Republicans.¹ Here the *ci-devant noble* officers under Condé, trudging in the mud as so many privates, their orders of Saint-Louis pinned to their haversacks, often saw opposed to them the ranks of their former regiments, led by men they had known at highest as *sous-officiers*, and the contest was not less savage because some Gallic wit passed between Royalist and Republican. It was with these armies that Lefebvre, Saint-Cyr, Soult, and Oudinot first came under fire, and along with Ney, Davout, and Desaix, emerged from the crowd. Here, in this theatre by the Rhine, Pichegru and Hoche first became Commanders-in-Chief, and Moreau first led an active army. Here Bernadotte became a Captain before he passed to the 'Nord', and Marmont also made a short appearance. Three of the future Ministers of the Empire served here; Clarke, who was to be Minister for War; Savary, who was to succeed Fouché at the head of the Police; Lavalette, who was to have the *Postes*. Bonaparte himself at one time applied to be transferred to the Rhine. The troops belonging to these forces were poor, half starved, and not half clothed, for

¹ Bittard des Portes, 24-8.

the Republic did but little for the soldiers behind whom its politicians raved in safety : still, these two armies had a strong attraction for many that served with them. To Hoche, when absent, his 'Moselle' was still as dear as a mistress ; the unromantic Soult in his old age looked back with interest on the scene of his first attempts at winning distinction ; whilst the cold-blooded Saint-Cyr had a special devotion for this part of his service, an affection he transferred in due time to the force that continued the history of these two armies, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. There is something pathetic in the way in which Saint-Cyr, at last a Marshal, but old and isolated amidst the gilded crowd whose members were jostling one another in the race for reward and glory under the Empire, looked back with longing eyes on the scene of his first trials in the Art which he loved so well. And if here, as in most places, he was cynical, still here began the friendship and kindly rivalry between him and Desaix, honourable to men of such different characters and actions, which did so much for these armies and which ended only when Desaix, dead but victorious, lay on the field of Marengo.

The close contact with the Royalists gave rise to many a suspicion of treachery, and the armies were hardly fortunate in their commanders. Yet the troops that were welded into the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' believed themselves superior to all the other armies and especially prided themselves on their skill. Not for them the wild rushes, the frantic assaults of the men Bonaparte led. 'Tacticiens raisonnéurs', Napoleon styled them, and they gave the Empire a worthy and characteristic representative in Saint-Cyr, who, always thinking of his Art, deemed half the joy of victory gone if the foe had not made full use of his advantages.

For students of the military art the theatre in which the 'Moselle' and the 'Rhin' worked is most interesting. On either side of a mountain range two armies faced each other, the 'Rhin' in the valley of the river against Wurmser's Austrians, and, to the west and in the Vosges, the 'Moselle' against Brunswick's Prussians.¹ The mountains could be passed with ease at certain points, so that Nature gave full facilities for turning movements, whilst the river Rhine, which also could be crossed, varied the situation by certain possibilities. Further, as the sister forces

¹ Vogel, xvii, xxii, xxiii, xxv.

on neither side were bound by very close ties, Brunswick and Wurmser having much mutual mistrust, and the commanders of the 'Moselle' and 'Rhin' always thinking each of the safety of his own army, the way lay open for a multitude of complications and variations, which curiously affected the fate of the campaigns. It is permissible to think that all this told on the style of the Generals, and, if we take the two commanders that rose to high rank here, Desaix and Saint-Cyr, we may see how they were influenced by their first surroundings. Both Saint-Cyr and Napoleon considered that Desaix was rather apt to niggle in his fights in this theatre, trying to do too much with his advanced guard. Saint-Cyr himself, calmly weighing each stroke as if he were playing chess, although ready to throw every man into the fight for the great result, still perhaps suffered from his training in this restricted theatre. Throughout his life he preferred strokes restrained in narrow limits to the broad sweep of Napoleon's campaigns.¹ Practised in a number of small but hot affairs, he had something of the attitude of a fencer, ready to deliver his stroke, often a telling one, but always thinking most of the recovery of his position after the delivery of his thrust.

Now to give the detailed history of the 'Centre' and of the 'Rhin'. In December 1791 the events of the French Revolution were leading to war between France and Austria, and the government of Louis XVI decided to form three armies for the defence of the north-eastern frontier—the Armée du Nord, the Armée du Centre, and the Armée du Rhin. The Armée du Centre at first had a strength of about 20,000 men, its headquarters were at Metz, and on the 14th December 1791 the Marquis de Lafayette was appointed to command it.² Amongst his officers was Lt.-Colonel Grouchy, just appointed to the 12th Chasseurs,³ the titular Colonel of which, Menou, was too much engaged in politics at Paris to join his regiment, and did not dream then that he would ever be the 'Abdullah Menou' of Egypt. Murat would appear to have been a private under Grouchy, but I do not find this conjunction of the two men noticed by any writer. On the 27th January 1792 Grouchy was promoted Colonel of the 2nd Dragoons at the instance of

¹ See the description of these two men farther on, Chapter III.

² Phipps, 62, 67-8. ³ Ibid., 103.

Lafayette, the politics of the two men being much the same. Grouchy went to Verdun, where the volunteer battalion of which Davout was second-in-command was ordered in April, but where it does not seem to have arrived. The volunteer battalion of Lt.-Colonel Marceau came in May to Montmédy, and that of Lt.-Colonel Oudinot apparently to Metz. In the same month Lieutenant Hoche joined his infantry regiment in Thionville. Captain Lefebvre with a battalion organized from the former Gardes Françaises had probably joined the army early in 1792. Marmont, a cadet at Châlons, did not belong technically to this army, but he was in its district, as was Duroc, the future Grand Maréchal du Palais, now with Marmont at Châlons.

On the 20th April the French government declared war on Austria, and on the 1st May Prussia joined Austria against France. In the first stages of the war the 'Centre' was distributed between the camp of Tiercelet (north-west of Thionville), Dun (between Verdun and Stenay), and Givet. Its role was to draw off pressure from the Armée du Nord, and with this object a force was sent towards Namur. Such affairs had the effect of inuring the troops to war, but they afford no material for estimating Lafayette's ability in the field. He may have had the makings of a good General in him: indeed one of his first acts had been to call the attention of the War Minister to the neglected state of Verdun,¹ which, had he been listened to, might have been a hard nut for Brunswick to crack. But he had been so much mixed up with politics that he always had one eye turned on the Capital. Throughout the summer of 1792 he was engaged in a struggle with the Jacobin party in the Assembly, but it was not as commander of the 'Centre' that he played his last stake in this game, and lost.² A month before the events of the 12th August the movement known as the *Chassé-croisé* caused the two armies, 'Nord' and 'Centre', along with their commanders, to change places, so that Lafayette now leaves the present history, and Marshal Luckner from the 'Nord' enters it.

The *Chassé-croisé* took from the 'Centre' Grouchy, now commanding the 6th Hussars,³ Davout with his volunteer bat-

¹ Chuquet, *Invasion*, 27; Charavay, 308.

² Phipps, 90-3, 104-7.

³ I presume that the 6th Hussars at this moment was the Lauzun Regiment, which became the 5th later. Susane, *Cav. franç.*, ii. 269.

talion,¹ and Murat, now Sergeant in the 12th Chasseurs. Duroc emigrated. Marmont was commissioned on the 1st September as *sous-lieutenant* in the 1st Regiment of Artillery, but did not join at Metz until early in November.² Oudinot's battalion remained with the 'Centre', I presume near Metz or in rear. General of Brigade Berthier came with Luckner from the 'Nord' as Chief of the Staff. Lefebvre had been promoted Captain in the 13th battalion of light infantry, formed from the paid National Guard of Paris, in which he had been serving, and he is said to have gone with his battalion to form part of the garrison of Thionville at this time, but it was the 2nd battalion of the 103rd Regiment, formed in the same manner, that was in Thionville during its siege in August to October, while the 13th *bataillon des Chasseurs* went to the 'Centre' and was at Valmy.³ Perhaps the difficulty may be solved by supposing that Lefebvre had changed his corps.

I have already, in my history of the Armée du Nord, described the old Marshal Luckner, who now took up his head-quarters at Metz as commander of the 'Centre'.⁴ In the whirlwind that was raging round him the rough old Hussar, fearless in the field, was soon bewildered. In reality he sympathized with Lafayette, and wished to preserve the Monarchy, to which his promotion to the rank of Marshal had now reconciled him. He disliked the political movements in Paris, but he had craft enough to go with the tide and to declare, 'Sacrétié, moi che si jacobin !'⁵ His sudden turns, and the impossibility of believing that so blunt and rough a soldier entertained deep schemes, puzzled both friends and 'patriots'. But it was known that Berthier led him in military matters, and it seemed safe to assume that the same influence told on his politics, so that, unfortunately for Berthier, all the blame for the Marshal's deviations from pure 'patriotism' (or Jacobinism) were put down to his account. Luckner himself, overwhelmed by the confusion in military policy and by the changes in the government, remained in his camp under Metz, awaiting events.

It is now necessary to describe the formation of the sister

¹ Vigier, i. 24-5.

² Marmont, i. 24-9.

³ Wirth, 63 ; Susane, *Inf. franç.*, ii. 113, 116 ; Chuquet, *Retraite*, 237.

⁴ Phipps, 68-70.

⁵ 'Sacristi, moi je suis Jacobin !' Chuquet, *Invasion*, 196.

army, in order to bring the history of both forces up to the point at which their real influence on the war began. The Armée du Rhin was the least important of the first three armies formed. It was originally placed under the same Marshal Luckner whom we have just seen coming to the 'Centre' from the 'Nord': he did in fact command each army in turn. In the 'Rhin' he had a nominal strength of 35,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry, guarding the line of the Swiss frontier to the river Lauter.¹ The army, since it did not change its name, and since 'Rhin' was a more striking title than 'Centre', is rather better known than is its neighbour, but it might have had a still wider fame than it ever possessed. Its head-quarters were at Strasbourg, and it was in that town that, on the night of the 25th April 1792, the patriot Mayor, Dietrich, entertained at his house a company which included the Chief of the Staff to the army, General Victor de Broglie, and his young A.D.C., the Chevalier de Veygoux, to be known as Desaix. After dinner Dietrich suggested to a young Captain, Rouget de L'Isle, that he should compose a 'beau chant' for the warrior people that was rising from all parts at the appeal of the Nation for the war declared in the city that day. All night Rouget de L'Isle worked, and next morning he brought the result to Dietrich, who, trying the air on his *clavecin*, was the first to sing what was printed as the 'Chant de guerre pour l'armée du Rhin, dédié au Maréchal Luckner'. By a curious fate the song became known to France and to the world under another title, 'La Marseillaise'.² It was to ring on many battle-fields. Luckner, Dietrich, and Victor de Broglie probably heard it as they in their time mounted the scaffold: certainly it thundered round the guillotine when Louis XVI died.³

To begin with the future Marshals belonging to this army. On its first formation Kellermann, a Lieut.-General, or rather what I call a Wing-commander, was with it, as was Lieutenant Bernadotte, in an infantry regiment; Soult was a Sergeant and drill-instructor in a regiment of volunteers. In May 1792 the volunteer battalion, 2nd Seine-et-Oise, in which Brune was Major Adjutant-major, came from the Armée du Nord, from Doullens to Belfort.⁴ Brune is a very difficult man to follow, but probably he came with the battalion. In June 1792 the battalion mutinied when on the march from Belfort to Stras-

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 2-3. ² Tiersot, 60, 66-103. ³ Ibid., 134. ⁴ Déprez, 492.

bourg. The reason is not stated, but the corps seems to have been in confusion, and the officers complained that their Colonel had imprisoned them. Brune, although only Adjutant-major, was called to Paris to account for this, Servan, the War Minister, considering the battalion as composed of so many brigands: they had refused to follow the route assigned to them and had pillaged everywhere they had passed, especially at Provins. The Department, hoping to reclaim them, had sent them long and pathetic addresses, but without effect.¹ This battalion had been formed in October 1791.² Brune does not seem to have returned, but to have remained in Paris, whence he made excursions to the Armée du Nord and into the Interior.

As for others with whom we are concerned, Clarke, a future Minister of War to Napoleon, was Lt.-Colonel in the 2nd cavalry regiment. Savary, a future Police Minister, was Lieutenant in a heavy cavalry regiment, the 'Royal Normandie', which soon became, first the 19th, and then the 18th cavalry regiment. Desaix, a Captain in the 46th infantry regiment of the regulars, was, as I have said, A.D.C. to General Victor de Broglie, the Chief of the Staff to the army.³ The *Chassé-croisé* of July 1792 did not affect this force.

Scarcely was war declared, when changes in the chief command of the army began. Early in May 1792 Luckner was transferred to the 'Nord' and handed over the 'Rhin' temporarily to La Morlière. This General called himself the oldest soldier in the army, as he well might, for he was eighty-five, too aged to understand the Revolution. He was relieved on the 21st July by Lieut.-General the Duc de Biron, but by now Luckner was with the 'Centre', and had been given the superior guidance of the 'Rhin' as well as of his own army. The 'Rhin' was soon affected by the political situation: on the 10th August the King was suspended from his office by the Assembly, and on the 16th Carnot and other commissioners arrived at headquarters and called on the officers to state individually whether they submitted 'purement et simplement' to the decrees of the Assembly. Biron himself was devoted to the Revolution which was to slay him, but many officers hesitated and were suspended.

¹ Aulard, i. 281; Rousset, 58; D'Hauterive, 201; Thénard et Guyot, *Le Conventionnel Goujon*, in *Rev. Historique*, Mai-Juin 1906, 42-3.

² Susane, *Inf. franç.*, i. 343.

³ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 11.

Among these were Victor de Broglie and Desaix: the A.D.C. accompanied his General in his retirement and soon, as Biron rather angrily put it, managed to get arrested for carrying compromising letters to de Broglie. After being a prisoner for two months, Desaix was released and allowed to rejoin the staff of the army.¹ Another officer had suffered at the same time. On the 25th August Carnot and Prieur arrived at Huningue and received an adhesion to the decrees of the Assembly that would have been unanimous, had it not been for the protest of young Rouget de L'Isle. In vain did Carnot ask him not to force them to dismiss for want of patriotism the author of the 'Marseillaise': in vain were his words accompanied by the strains of the song, played at his order by a band outside. Rouget de L'Isle was firm in his protest and he was suspended.² Carnot need not have been surprised, for the Revolution was fast developing a taste for devouring its own children.

Meanwhile on the front of the army Biron had been carrying out several movements. Under him were two Lieut.-Generals, Kellermann and Custine. With the latter, a man that did much and under happier circumstances might have gone far, we shall be soon concerned, but at present Kellermann must take the stage. He had been commanding at Landau, where he had won general favour and was described as loyal and as always the same. In the classical style of the moment Landau presented him with a civic wreath. In May 1792 he was moved down to the camp of Neunkirchen, between the Sarre and the Blies, to connect the left of the 'Rhin' with the right of the 'Centre'. He had five regular and five volunteer battalions, with five cavalry regiments, each battalion of volunteers being apparently linked with one of regulars. Altogether the force was 8,000 strong: in it served Lieut.-Colonel Clarke, Sergeant Soult, and Lieutenant Pajol, the brilliant light cavalry General of the Empire. Here Kellermann, a wise officer of the old school, kept his men steadily at work and drill, teaching them to pitch and strike camps and to raise fortifications, whilst he kept the small German Princes quiet.³

To the north of the 'Rhin' the Allies were preparing to invade France, and on the right bank of the Rhine the Prince of Hohenlohe-Kirchberg had assembled a mass of Austrians, most of

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 18-21, 298-9. ² Tiersot, 165-7. ³ Postscript, *Vict. et Conq.*, i.

which was between Heidelberg and Mannheim. Finding that the Austrians were preparing to cross the river at Speyer, Biron took up a position defending the lines of the Queich, or of Landau, taking post himself on the right with 15,000 men, while Kellermann with his 8,000 was on the left of the fortress of Landau. On the night of the 31st July Hohenlohe's troops began crossing at Speyer, and on the 5th August Luckner, in virtue of the control that he held over both armies, arrived on the scene and withdrew the army southwards behind the river Lauter, leaving Custine with 6,000 men to defend Landau. Biron then marched up the river to defend Strasbourg from a threatened attack, while Kellermann remained at Wissembourg to hold the lines of the Lauter and to cover lower Alsace from any attack from the north.¹

It will be seen that Kellermann, a very senior General, was taking a prominent part, and it is important to notice that, although he was now going to earth and displaying the trust in fortifications with which he was afterwards reproached in the south, he had proposed a much bolder policy. He had not ceased to advise a stroke at the enemy's magazines at Speyer, Worms, and Philippsburg, and the seizure of Mayence and of Coblenz, for the Ecclesiastical Electorates were weakly garrisoned. He quoted the example of Frederick the Great, who (wrote Kellermann) saved himself by seizing Saxony. Luckner for his part said that with 25,000 men he would go straight for Cologne, cross the Rhine, and sweep the country so clear of supplies that for four years the enemy would not be able to conduct a campaign on the right bank.² Much is said of the revolutionary ardour, but this will show that the Generals of the old army were bold enough. The government, however, would not entertain such projects, and the advance of the Allies in time covered the exposed districts.

To Luckner, Biron, Kellermann, and Custine the advance of the Allies seemed to mean an invasion of Alsace with a view to the permanent conquest of that province, and Brunswick's march towards the Capital to be a mere demonstration to cover the real attack. As it was, the pressure on Kellermann, instead of increasing, soon began to diminish. Hohenlohe with his Austrians and the *émigré* army of Condé, 4,000 strong,³ drew off

¹ *Pajol*, i. 22-4. ² *Chuquet, Custine*, 16-31. ³ *Bittard des Portes*, 25.

about the 12th August from Neustadt and Dingenfeld and marched for Homburg, throwing out columns to Bitche and to the Sarre to disquiet Biron and Kellermann. Still there was nothing in these movements to make it certain that the attempt on Strasbourg was abandoned, and the Generals mistook the passing skirt of the storm for its full volume: Luckner, now back at Metz, continued to curse his fate, and Kellermann at Wissembourg to work at his lines.

Meanwhile Brunswick was advancing from Trèves, marching between Luxembourg and Thionville, and the first skirmish took place on the 19th August between a small body, pushed out to Fontoy¹ under Deprez-Crassier, and the Prussian cavalry. The French were routed, but the strength of their resistance surprised the enemy, who had fancied that troops shaken by the Revolution would make no real stand. Indeed, it is clear that the Prince of Hohenlohe, for instance, did not understand how officers could serve the Revolution while the Monarchy still stood,² for he made proposals both to Luckner and to Deprez-Crassier (to the latter in a curious interview with him) that they should join the King. On the 23rd August Longwy fell to the Prussians after a slight defence. Some desertions among senior officers had already alarmed Luckner, and now, abandoning Saarlouis and Thionville to their fate, he drew back under Metz, 'into a barrel', as Kellermann described it. Brunswick had brushed by the Armée du Centre, and nothing formidable lay between him and Paris: abandoning the prudent plan of attacking Thionville and Metz and thus securing his base, the Duke was tempted onwards for the Capital.³

At Metz a most complicated state of affairs existed. The *Conseil exécutif* was suspicious of Luckner and on the 21st August it had ordered that he should be replaced, and that the Chief of the Staff, Berthier, with two other Generals, Jarry and Hiller, should be dismissed.⁴ That they had some grounds for their action is shown by the fact that Jarry emigrated that very day.⁵

On the 24th August the *Moniteur* had declared that Luckner's great age and his indifference to politics exposed him

¹ North-west of Thionville.

² Chuquet, *Invasion*, 170-3; *Le Grand*, 78-80.

³ Chuquet, *Invasion*, 158-98; Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 82-101; Thiers, *Rév.*, i. 286-7.

⁴ Aulard, *Recueil*, i. 27.

⁵ Chuquet, *Invasion*, 198.

to the perfidious influences of such men as Jarry, Berthier, and 'autres contre-révolutionnaires', and the Assembly had been pleased when the Minister announced his replacement. But in the meantime the Commissioners of the Assembly had reached Metz and had found the old Marshal professing the most patriotic sentiments. He wept, he swore he had no other wish than to die at his post: what could he do with 17,000 men against 100,000? That did not matter: if he could not command as a Marshal, he could perhaps act as a partisan, for which role indeed he was well fitted. Other Generals, Valence and Beauharnais, pleaded for him.¹

All this told on the Commissioners, and they were feeling favourably inclined towards the old Marshal, when they and he received a stunning blow from the arrival of a new commander. Suddenly, whilst still busy with his spade, and little dreaming of the approaching change in his own fortunes, Kellermann had received orders to march for Metz with 5,000 men from the Armée du Rhin, and to replace Luckner in the command of the 'Centre'. On the whole it was well for France that he was transferred to Metz and so commanded at Valmy, but the forces in the Rhine theatre probably suffered from his removal. Not so rash as Custine, but more tenacious than him, Kellermann would not have pushed his conquests as far, nor lost them as easily as Custine did. Probably he would have succeeded Biron and would have saved the army from many of the disasters it was to experience in 1793.

For some days after his arrival at Metz Kellermann wisely refrained from insisting on taking over the command, and the difficulty was surmounted in a manner pleasing to all parties. A brilliant idea had struck the Commissioners: why not make Luckner Generalissimo of the three armies, the 'Nord' (under Dumouriez), the 'Centre' (under Kellermann), and the 'Rhin' (under Biron)? Kellermann was induced, for one can hardly believe him to have been quite sincere, to declare that he would not take over the command of the 'Centre' unless Luckner were made Generalissimo, and the *Conseil exécutif* at Paris half contemptuously fell in with this plan. Accordingly Luckner went to Châlons as Generalissimo, and was ordered to send every day to the *Conseil* copies of all his orders, deliberations, letters, and

¹ Chuquet, *Invasion*, 199-201.

reports from the armies. The *Conseil* would send him what orders it considered necessary.¹ On the 2nd September Kellermann assumed command of the Armée du Centre.² With his force from the 'Rhin' had come Ney, promoted *adjudant* on the 14th June 1792.

Once in the saddle, Kellermann began to organize his army. He formed a high opinion of Berthier and wanted to retain him as Chief of the Staff, or at least as an ordinary General of Brigade, but the charge of 'incivisme' that had been made in the Assembly was stronger than the recommendations of Luckner and of Kellermann, who praised Berthier as a good citizen and a good soldier. Berthier himself wrote to the Minister, General Servan, pleading for an inquiry and begging to be allowed to remain with the army as a volunteer, in a post in which he could shed his blood for his country. Servan replied that public opinion made it necessary that Berthier should go, which looks as if he himself did not believe in any guilt. Berthier remained at Metz after the army had gone, and as late as the 3rd November he was still pleading to be allowed to rejoin Kellermann, who wanted him. Custine, then commanding the 'Rhin', was also urging the Minister to send Berthier to him, but in so maladroit a manner as to suggest reasons for his attachment to Royalty. Eventually the staff officer that these commanders so much appreciated was sent, in May 1793, to serve in La Vendée.³

On the 2nd September Verdun surrendered to Brunswick, and on the same day the Armée du Centre received orders to march to Revigny-aux-Vaches and to be prepared to effect its junction with Dumouriez, who, with a part of the Armée du Nord to which the name of Armée des Ardennes was given, was moving from Sedan to the passes of the Argonne. Accordingly on the 4th September at 9 p.m. Kellermann left the camp of Frascaty (or Freskaty), and moved up the right bank of the Moselle to Pont-à-Mousson.⁴ Here he was joined by the division which Luckner had pushed towards Verdun and which had found the enemy in force at Manheules. The Duc de Chartres, who was

¹ Aulard, i. 39-40; Chuquet, *Invasion*, 200, 204-5.

² Chuquet, *Custine*, 232 note.

³ *Le Grand*, 92; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 62; Derrecagaix, *Le Général, Le Maréchal Berthier*, 2 vols., Paris, Chapelot, 1904-5, pp. 25-31.

⁴ *Revue de Paris*, 15th Sept. 1908, note 3.

in command of this division, had started in the highest spirits, caracolled along and calling to his men to advance for the Nation and for Liberty, but, after a slight skirmish, he gave orders to retreat: 'ce n'était pas très brave, mais c'était prudent'.¹ Here also at Pont-à-Mousson the army was joined by 8,500 men from the Armée du Rhin, a detachment larger than that actually ordered. As Biron wrote with commendable self-sacrifice, 'The defence of Paris should be placed above everything else, and I have sent all the best I had'. This was probably true enough, but the state of equipment in the armies is shown by the fact that Kellermann sent back to Biron three battalions of volunteers who were not even armed.² The troops that Kellermann had taken over at Metz had originally, before the *Chassé-croisé*, belonged to the 'Nord', presumably the best army in being at this period: now he received this fine detachment from the 'Rhin', so that his army may be taken to have been superior to any that France could then put in the field. Its strength was 22,000, and, although a part of it was not present at Valmy, a study of its composition will serve to dispel the dangerous delusion that once held, that at Valmy a mass of raw volunteers threw back the experienced veterans of Brunswick.

In the first place, the whole of Kellermann's artillery and of his cavalry was composed of soldiers of the regular army. Of infantry he had fourteen regular and nine volunteer battalions. Of the latter, four were with the reserve, and one was attached to the artillery and left at Vitry with the park. Secondly, it is probable that even the volunteer battalions contained a good proportion of men that had served before. The army, therefore, was composed almost entirely of ordinary soldiers under old and experienced officers. In fact, if we take the volunteers as corresponding in great degree to the militia of the old system, Kellermann commanded just such an army as would have been produced by the *ancien régime*. As far as the troops knew, the King still reigned, and they saw Princes of the Blood Royal in their ranks. If the men drank, 'To the Nation', they also did so 'Aux Princes français!'³ If Kellermann called on them to

¹ *Le Grand* (who was in this division), 84-6; Chuquet, *Invasion*, 215; Chuquet, *Valmy*, 162.

² Chuquet, *Invasion*, 207, 209, two passages which do not seem to agree.

³ *Le Grand*, 85.

cheer for the Nation, he rallied them as 'Messieurs'. Even if the stake thrown down at Valmy bore the Republican die, the metal certainly came from the mint of the Monarchy.¹

Although it numbered only 22,000 men, the army considered itself very strong.² It was not well supplied, indeed many of the soldiers were unshod, a state of which they were to have ample experience under the Republic, but all were cheerful, and, a matter at all times of great importance but now of especial value, the men apparently were confident in their officers. The artillery is described by an eyewitness as having fine pieces with good teams, admirably served and supplied with abundant ammunition.³ The conduct of the population through which the troops marched was encouraging; the towns sent out deputations; glad boys and girls brought sweets, flowers, and ribbands; the women, even 'grandes dames', laid out tables in fine weather in the open, in bad times in the theatres, halls, or barns, on which repasts were served; and the doors of private houses flew open. The bloody Terror, the miseries of the Revolution, were undreamt of: with flowers, song and feasting France welcomed her army, which came on, feeling that behind it was—the Nation.⁴

Among men that were to become well known later, there were in this force Schérer, a future War Minister and commander of armies, who was now Chief of the Staff to one of the bodies that composed the advanced guard; General Linch, who commanded the main body, an Englishman, according to Chuquet, but more probably one of the Irish exiles; the young Duc de Chartres, son of Philippe-Égalité, who at the age of nineteen had been promoted *maréchal de camp* (General of Brigade) by seniority, and now led a cavalry brigade, with his younger brother, 'M. Montpensier', acting as his A.D.C.; Lieut.-General the Comte de Valence in command of the reserve, an officer of high character, much valued both by Kellermann and Dumouriez; d'Aboville, an officer of forty-eight years' service, in command of the artillery that was to play the winning card

¹ For the composition of the army see Chuquet, *Invasion*, 207-12, and *Le Grand*, 125-7, but I think the latter includes troops not brought up.

² Louis-Philippe in Chuquet, *Valmy*, 162.

³ *Le Grand*, 91.

⁴ 'Nous sentions la France derrière nous prête à se défendre', *Le Grand*, who was with the army, 95-6.

at Valmy ; and his Chief of the Staff, the elder Senarmont, who is represented in Horace Verney's picture of Valmy as wounded and held up by two gunners.¹

As for the Chief of the Staff, Berthier, as I have said, had to be left behind ; his place was taken up immediately by Schauenbourg,² a most excellent officer, whom we shall meet later in command of his army, and who was a capital organizer. One of Kellermann's A.D.C. was Colaud,³ who became one of the chiefs of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and with whom Ney was to have much to do. Kellermann himself, brave and calm, was the very man to command nervous troops on the field, and even his Jacobin calumniators allowed his merits. With all his roughness he was really modest, at least in council, about his own claims, and, whatever the worth of his plans, he bore criticism without resenting it. He is accused of jealousy towards others, but after all that is as natural to a General as to an actor. Certainly after Valmy he suffered from an outbreak of vanity, asserting that he had driven four armies before him. Believing himself, as Bonaparte complained long afterwards, to be the first General in Europe,⁴ he claimed the *bâton* of Marshal to avoid the inconvenience of having a number of Generals without a superior over them all. If this seems ludicrous now, it is only fair to remember that he really had done much and was a very senior officer, and that the flight of the *émigrés* had opened suddenly to the officers that remained with the colours possibilities undreamt of before, so that a little mental dizziness need only cause a smile. Such was the man on whom the fate of France was soon to rest.

The march that Kellermann now made to Valmy, if followed on the map, appears to have been a very hesitating and uncertain performance, but he was ignorant of Brunswick's real objective and wished to be prepared for any eventuality. Leaving Pont-à-Mousson on the 5th September, he marched by

¹ Général Alexandre-François Hureau de Senarmont (1732-1805), unable to serve after Valmy : not his son, Général Alexandre-Antoine Hureau de Senarmont (1769-1810), the General of the Empire, who commanded the artillery at Friedland. See Girod de l'Ain, *Les deux Senarmont*.

² Général Baron Balthazar-Alexis-Henri-Antoine Schauenbourg (1748-1831). See Colin, *Tactique et Discipline*, Preface.

³ Général Comte Claude-Sylvestre Colaud (1754-1819), Senator 1801, Pair de France 1814, Michaud, lxi. 188.

⁴ *Corr. Nap.* i. 279.

Toul and Void,¹ and on the 8th reached Ligny. Here he was well situated to take one or other of four courses. If it became clear that the Duke were striking at Paris, Kellermann could make for Châlons by Vitry ; he could join Dumouriez at Sainte-Menehould, if the latter were attacked there ; he could move on the Moselle, if the Prussians aimed at Thionville, or he could follow by Saint-Mihiel, if they went north for Sedan. His position was approved of by Dumouriez, Luckner, and Servan. Brunswick did not leave Verdun till the 11th September, but Kellermann, perplexed by rumours, moved on the 10th to Saint-Dizier, and then on the 12th to Bar-le-Duc, first thinking of Paris, and then of Lorraine.² On the 13th an alarming dispatch from Dumouriez informed him that Brunswick had cut through the Argonne, and that Dumouriez wanted the 'Centre' to draw near his left. Fearing that such a movement would entangle his army in the defeat that he foresaw for Dumouriez, Kellermann decided to aim for Châlons, and marched by Bar-le-Duc and Revigny to Vitry, whence he said he could lend a hand to Dumouriez. On the 15th he was at Vitry,³ and here he received the most pressing and imperious orders from the Generalissimo to march at once with all his forces on Sainte-Menehould and to make his junction with Dumouriez. At the same time an A.D.C. of the latter General arrived with the same urgent request.⁴

With the movements of Dumouriez and of Brunswick in this campaign I have already dealt,⁵ and here will say only that Dumouriez was at Grand-Pré, holding the passes of the Argonne, when on the 12th September Brunswick, advancing from Verdun, seized the defile of La Croix-aux-Bois, north of Grand-Pré, and thus turned the French left. Instead of falling back on Châlons, Dumouriez drew in his centre and left on his right at Sainte-Menehould. By the 16th he had got his troops, shaken by panics, into a position near Sainte-Menehould, where he prepared for attack either from the east or from the west. Brunswick was thus free, by marching south, to place himself between Dumouriez and the Capital.

¹ This appears to have been Berthier's last day with the army, *Le Grand*, 92.

² Ibid., 91-4 ; Chuquet, *Valmy*, 162-5 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, ii, 111, 120-1.

³ Chuquet, *Valmy*, 164-5 ; *Le Grand*, 94-7.

⁴ Chuquet, *Valmy*, 127, 146-8, 165.

⁵ Phipps, 118-22.

On receiving Luckner's order, which he may have regarded as involving an eventual retreat on Châlons, Kellermann acted with fair promptitude. First he lightened his army. A third of the *avant-garde* had been left behind at Bar-le-Duc to protect his rear,¹ and now another third was sent back eastwards to Sampigny² to guard the workshops there: the pontoon train, the heavy carriages, and part of the artillery park were also left, and only thirty-six guns of position were retained with the force, but these had a double supply of ammunition. On the 17th September Kellermann left Vitry amid a storm of urgent messages calling him to the Argonne, and on the 18th he was at Dampierre-le-Château, six miles from Dumouriez.³

No man ever went more unwillingly to gain a name in history than Kellermann now did. He was really acting in the most sensible and proper manner, but it is impossible to help chuckling, as Chuquet does, over his own forecast of what was to happen. He told the Minister for War that the right course would be to fall back westwards on Suippes, before Châlons, and there to reinforce the army. 'L'ami Dumouriez', no doubt, would much like a general battle, but Kellermann, wise old soldier as he was, would show his comrade how men of prudence and forethought made war. The next day, laughs Chuquet, this cautious General had to accept battle with his face to Châlons and to Paris, in the worst possible position. There was nothing absurd in his doubts and misgivings. He probably looked on Dumouriez, with much ground for such an opinion, as a political mountebank, ready to sacrifice everything for the wildest dreams, and he knew that the troops of that commander had just taken to their heels at the mere sight of the enemy. If they did this again, and rushed on his army, his own troops, apt as he said the French were to believe themselves betrayed, might follow the example. His own troops composed the only force near Brunswick on which much trust could be put. Were he routed, or even swept to the south away from the path of Brunswick, the Châlons mob would fly at the approach of the Prussians and the Capital would fall. He thus marched on

¹ Chuquet, *Valmy*, 165.

² Between Commercy and Saint-Mihiel.

³ Chuquet, *Valmy*, 165-6; *Le Grand*, 97-100. For map see Feuille, xxi. 12, (Suippes) of the French 1:100,000 survey.

Sainte-Menehould against his own judgement, much as Macmahon marched on Metz in 1870. Had the Prussians acted with as much promptitude in 1792 as in 1870, Kellermann would undoubtedly have arrived at a scene of disaster.

The stiff, formal, cautious Kellermann, and the supple, daring, intriguer Dumouriez, did not differ from each other more than did their armies. Not only was the proportion of volunteer to regular battalions in Dumouriez's army (thirty-six volunteer to twenty-one regular) far higher than in Kellermann's (seven volunteer to sixteen regular), but also the organization was different. Whereas Dumouriez, continuing Lafayette's practice, looked on his volunteer units as an integral part of his army, and brigaded them with regular units, Kellermann reorganized some of his volunteer battalions by taking the grenadier companies and picked men from the less-trained ones and forming new battalions in this way. Altogether Dumouriez's force was 35,000 strong, and Kellermann's 16,000.¹

On the 19th September Kellermann crossed the Aube and took up a position, recommended by Dumouriez, on a plateau to the right or north of the main road to Châlons. Dumouriez lay on another plateau on Kellermann's right, facing about north-west. Naturally expecting Brunswick, coming from the north, after getting through the Argonnes, to march along the foot of the hills or through them, Dumouriez believed the attack would be on himself. He therefore in good faith represented Kellermann's position as *en potence*, that is, as thrown back at right angles to his own, simply to guard against any turning movement from the west or south. On inspection, however, Kellermann condemned the position. Behind him was the Aube, running in a marshy valley, his left was commanded by the mound of Valmy, and a pond cut the communication with Dumouriez. Kellermann therefore informed Dumouriez, with whom he was on equal terms, that he would retire next day across the Aube to a height on the left, or south, of the main road. Making no objection, Dumouriez pressed him, in the unlikely case of a Prussian attack on him, to take post on the

¹ Chuquet, *Invasion*, 195, 207-10, 248, deducting the troops left behind, see Chuquet, *Valmy*, 165. Actually at the mill of Valmy were the eleven regular and two volunteer battalions of the first and second lines. The battalions of the advanced guard and reserve were on the left.

heights of Valmy and of La Lune, a mound to the south-east of Valmy, commanding most of the ground. At the moment part of Dumouriez's troops held the mound of Valmy and of Mont Yvron. Thus covered, the army lay down for rest, previous to the movement ordered for the morrow. Kellermann, in a strategic position he naturally disliked and in a tactical position he rightly condemned, wished for the day, while Dumouriez had his own anxieties, for on him the storm would first fall.

As the morning of the 20th September 1792 broke, the guns of Kellermann opened on an enemy dimly seen through the mist. Brunswick with his army was in front of him. The Duke had intended to place himself to the north-west of Dumouriez, threatening the French communications with Paris, whilst his left cut them off from the hills by seizing the Islettes pass. Once he got the French in the plain, the Duke would have struck them there, so that the attack he had prepared was that foreseen by Dumouriez. Had this programme been carried out, night would probably have seen the flight of the troops of Dumouriez, while Kellermann, if his men had stood firm, would have been retracing his steps. But the Duke had the King of Prussia with him, and a sovereign in your camp is often worth a strong reinforcement to your enemy. Believing Dumouriez to be in full retreat westwards, the King had made Brunswick move, not due south, but westwards also, to seize the Châlons road, which led from Sainte-Menehould through the position in which Kellermann lay. Between six and seven a.m. in the drizzling mist he came on Kellermann's outposts. Missing the nervous, shaky troops of Dumouriez, he had come on the one army in France that was in a fit state to withstand him.

The battle that ensued is fully described by Chuquet,¹ but its details have little real interest. It was one of shere, simple endurance under fire, 'who should pound longest', as Wellington would have said. Kellermann placed the mass of his army on the mound of Valmy: even a body of cavalry was crammed in rear of the infantry, quite uselessly, unless he meant to give the infantry a sense of security. The mutual jealousy of independent Generals has often ruined all co-operation and caused the loss of battles, but Dumouriez was superior this day to any such feelings. Acting as if he were Generalissimo of the two armies,

¹ Chuquet, *Valmy*.

or rather as if the success of Kellermann would be his own, he did all he could to support his comrade, sandwiching him between two bodies of his own army of the Ardennes. Beurnonville with sixteen battalions supported Stengel, the future cavalry leader in Italy, whom Dumouriez had already sent on Mont Yvron on the right. Chazot with nine battalions and eight squadrons, in which Murat and Ney may have served, was on the left. Thus three bodies, the centre being Kellermann's *Armée du Centre*, and the two others on the flanks both belonging to the *Armée du Nord* (or to that part of it called the *Armée des Ardennes* or de l'Argonne), alone really took part in the battle of Valmy. Still not content, Dumouriez planned a sweeping attack by his right, in which Jourdan's battalion would have taken part, to fall on Brunswick's rear. The rest of his army, his left wing, Dumouriez placed ready to support Kellermann if necessary. Meantime the Prussian officers on the mound of La Lune, abandoned by the French after some fighting, were jesting at having, after much travelling, at last reached 'the Moon'.

As far as Kellermann was concerned the battle was to be a defensive one. The stroke which Chazot had attempted on La Lune, and the sweep round the rear of the enemy, were planned by Dumouriez, and were to be executed by his troops. Kellermann's main idea was to mass his men at Valmy and there to await the attack. French Generals as a rule prefer to adopt offensive tactics, and Dumouriez always did so. In this case Kellermann knew that the great danger was from panic. Any confusion caused by a repulse, if he attacked or counter-attacked, might be fatal. The superiority of his artillery was another reason for not hazarding his men. In most armies the artillery is superior to the rest, and the French artillery has always been specially good. Looking round from Valmy, Kellermann must have thought himself secure. The assault would be by lines. All was well, if only for the refrain that rang in his ears, 'If the troops stand'. That question dominated the situation. At least he himself would stand; and much depends at such a moment on the resolution of the commander. Brunswick probably did not realize that he had changed foxes and had stumbled on a different army from that which he had been marching to meet. It was not till nearly one in the afternoon

that the attack was ordered. For long a heavy cannonade had been exchanged between the two sides. The Prussian army, believed then to be the finest in the world, had been drawn up in two lines, with its cavalry on either flank. The campaign, trying as it had been to the invaders, seemed at last to be coming to an end. One assault on the hill in front, and the unstable French, cut off from Paris, would take to flight, as they had been seen to do so short a time before. The Prussians moved, and the steady advance of the fine infantry in their straight lines was made the more impressive by a sudden change which came over the scene. All day there had been a high wind and thin rain had fallen, partly veiling the armies. The continued cannonade at last dispersed the clouds, and the sun shone out as if still better to display these splendid troops, the inheritors of the traditions of Frederick, as they marched to storm the hill. Meanwhile on the mound of Valmy Kellermann made his last preparations. Drawing up his men in three columns of deployed battalions, he ordered them to wait without firing until the enemy had reached the top of the height, and then to charge with the bayonet. Raising his hat, with its tricoloured cockade, on the point of his sword, he led the cry of 'Vive la Nation', while the bands struck up the air 'Ça ira'. Would the men stand? It began to seem as if they would. As the Prussians drew nearer, the French artillery told more and more on the infantry, on whom alone their fire was now directed, and their shots fell thickly, especially amongst the advanced body and the centre of the first line. Brunswick was too experienced a soldier to have failed to anticipate heavy loss, but he was not prepared for the firm countenance the French were displaying in their position. The steady, accurate drill of the Prussians had its evil side, and their firm but slow advance made their regiments a capital mark for the guns. Ney and others, now probably huddled against the mass on the hill, would in later days have carried out such an attack very differently. Swarms of skirmishers, presenting no fair mark for guns, would have rushed forward, teasing the mass which could return so small a front of fire, whilst in rear the columns would have glided, taking advantage of any cover offered, before they reached a gap in the enemy. That was reserved for Jena. Now the long Prussian lines would have had to cross the space between the

two forces, completely exposed to the fire of unbroken and unshaken troops, for these were not the French that had been flying like deer at Montcheutin. It was too much. After his troops had advanced some two hundred paces, Brunswick halted them, and there they remained, about thirteen hundred yards off, facing Valmy, whilst a trial of endurance continued with increasing confidence amongst the French and growing disgust amongst the Prussians.

The contest now became an artillery duel, and that a famous one. The Prussian guns had been placed by Tempelhoff, and those of the French by d'Aboville and Senarmont: all names distinguished in the annals of artillery. Amongst the Prussians Goethe was analysing his feelings as the swift messengers of death sang above his head. Kellermann, on horseback in the place of danger, had the two sons of the House of Orleans by him. His horse and that of Senarmont were killed by a round-shot and his men called on him not to expose himself so much, but he believed rightly that a good deal depended on his own presence and firmness. Dumouriez, doubtless bringing Captain Macdonald, his own A.D.C., rode up to see him at his request, and the two calmly discussed the situation amongst the bullets. Dumouriez judged that Brunswick would not assault, and went back to his own camp to await results.

The battle was going in favour of the French, when suddenly Hell itself seemed to open under their feet with a blast which for a time awed the fire of both sides into silence. A Prussian shell had blown up three ammunition wagons, placed too close to the fighting line: whole ranks of men disappeared, and the front line recoiled. Two old regiments fell into disorder, and the train of artillery, which then had only civilian drivers, fled in confusion. Massenbach from La Lune saw the opportunity and spurred back to bring Brunswick up and to get him to throw his men on Valmy. The moment was critical, but Kellermann now reaped the reward for his personal exposure. He was on the decisive spot and Brunswick was not. By word and action he rallied his men, while the Duc de Chartres, showing the resolution which was to fail him as King in 1848, brought up two fresh batteries. 'I have seldom seen finer pieces, and gunners so resolute,' says Le Grand¹ of these batteries which, arriving all

¹ *Le Grand*, 109.

bright and clean as if on parade, came into action near the windmill, to support the guns worn by the long cannonade. The earth once more trembled as the French showered their projectiles on the enemy, their shot singing with a clear high note to the heavier accompaniment of the Prussians. By the time Brunswick reached La Lune his opportunity was gone: the French were once more in order. Looking down on the cavalry of the French left, who had quietly dismounted and were feeding their horses, the old Duke determined not to deliver his attack. As he told the King, 'Hier schlagen wir nicht.' Victory, at best doubtful, would, he considered, be too dearly bought. He still cut off the French from Paris and held them in a position from which they must escape either by retreating away from the Capital, or by coming down and attacking him. At four in the afternoon, to block still further their way, Brunswick brought part of his force over to the right of La Lune, across the main road to Châlons. His troops moved slowly and in perfect order. At one moment Kellermann believed this meant a fresh attack, and he addressed his men, who once more raised their head-dresses on their bayonets as they shouted in reply. It was not to be. Stengel on the right had held at Mont Yvron as Kellermann had done at Valmy. The night drew in. The cannonade had lasted between seven and eight hours, so that both sides had nearly exhausted their ammunition, when pouring rain came down and blotted out the scene.

'From this place, and from this day,' said Goethe to his companions, 'dates a new epoch in the history of the world, and you will be able to say, "I was there".' The date was given by Kellermann, and the Revolution was saved by the General that was least its product. Valmy was almost entirely a moral victory, but, ill-sounding as that phrase is in our days, it was also a fruitful one. In itself it had been little more than a skirmish and a cannonade. The French had some 52,000 men, of whom only 36,000 were in line. Kellermann's own force had been but 16,000, the rest coming from the Armée des Ardennes under Dumouriez. The Prussians had some 34,000 or probably less. The *émigrés* forming the small army of the Princes did not come up in time to do more than hear the guns which gave sentence on their fate. The loss on both sides was but trifling:

300 on the part of the French, 180 amongst the Prussians. Dumouriez must be given much of the credit for the day. His troops had held Mont Yvron on Kellermann's right, protecting his left also, and had been of inestimable service to the Armée du Centre. The artillery had displayed their power and might well claim the largest share of the credit for the battle.

Kellermann had called the position in which he had had to fight 'désagréable', he might well have said detestable. Saint-Cyr, who had later to cross the ground several times, says that, remembering what then was the state of the troops, he could not conceive how they could have been exposed on ground so unfavourable.¹ As we have seen, and as Saint-Cyr seems to have known, Kellermann, far from choosing such a position, had condemned it the moment he saw it and had at once given orders to recross the Aube early the next morning, so that, if the Prussians had not arrived so early, they would have found him in the same excellent position that he actually occupied the day after the battle. Saint-Cyr, it is true, believed that it was the fault of the enemy that a rout did not ensue, but, good judge as he was, one may be allowed to dispute the conclusion. Awkwardly as the troops were massed, a solid block of troops which artillery fire does not shake and which possesses an equal, if not a superior artillery, forms a difficult mouthful to swallow. Had the men on the mound wavered, Brunswick would have attacked them, but they stood the trial well. Also the Duke knew that he might at any moment have to deal with the large body of French cavalry, who were anxious to charge.² Caught just when he was changing his position, and when, according to Dumouriez, he ought to have been safe, Kellermann did what was probably the best thing he could do, and it is to be remembered that Brunswick, the most skilful General of the time, must be taken as having approved.

Yet, after all, Kellermann had full right to be proud of the part played by himself and his army after the previous checks and panics of the French, and it must be acknowledged that he had deserved well of his country. Saint-Cyr, a General never lavish of praise, and who himself knew the difference between leading young troops at this period and old regiments later, has

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, lxxvii. 1 note.

² Chuquet, *Valmy*, 215; *Le Grand*, 109, 111.

justly and honourably said that it was more difficult to sustain such an affair with success now than it was later to win a great battle when both officers and men were equally instructed and inured to war.¹ Kellermann had stood and endured when it was all important to do nothing but stand and endure. Indeed the very limitations of his character had been in his favour, for they kept him from any stroke or manœuvre for which his men were unfitted. His troops could never have swooped down on the enemy from Valmy, as the wonderful army of Austerlitz, trained for years in camps, did from its position. A more daring General would have been tempted into some advance. A colder-blooded man might have failed to give confidence to the highly strung, feverish troops he led. His success gave confidence, not only to his army, but to that of Dumouriez, and the news went far. Alas, if he had but saved France for some better government than that of the Parisian butchers who now ruled her! The men he guarded from richly deserved gallows soon had a prison for him, and it was to be left for a man, at this moment a young Captain of artillery, to reward the veteran with the well-won title of 'Duc de Valmy', the only one of such ranks of the Empire that took its name from French soil. To Kellermann himself this day was the dearest of all his life and, before dying, he requested that his heart might be placed amongst the dead that had fallen on this field. There, in the quiet country, it rests unforgotten.

There had been some touches of humour during the day. One of the men that held on the hill is not ashamed to acknowledge that, when the Prussians displayed their strength in the advance, many eyes were turned to the rear. There, however, were only mud and marshes: 'Tout compte fait, ne vaut-il pas mieux rester ici sur notre butte, sans broncher?' Then, though Kellermann's exhortation told on his men, they had time to laugh at his Alsatian accent. The 'Vive la Nation' of history was, as it came from his lips, 'Camarates, courage! Ne craignez rien! Nous sommes vainqueurs. Vive la Nation!'² These too were early days of the Revolution. When he rallied his men after the explosion he called to them, 'Où allez-vous donc, *Messieurs*?', a word which would have cost him his life later. Indeed, even now his conduct was not entirely that of a true

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. lxxvii.

² *Le Grand*, 108, 110.

'patriot'. Proud of his victory, he suggested that a *Te Deum* should be sung. This horrified the Minister for War, who replied that the Marseillaise was more fit for the ears of free Frenchmen.¹ When a General talked of thanking God for a victory, surely he might fairly be looked on as a 'suspect!'

At the moment there was little thought of triumph: the day was looked on more as a respite than a victory, and, after a conference with Dumouriez, Kellermann began at about 9 p.m. to withdraw across the Aube to a very strong position between Dampierre-sur-Aube and Voilemont, behind the Yèvre and the Aube streams, with his right resting on Dumouriez's army, and his left difficult to turn. Fires lit on the hill of Valmy had prevented the enemy from suspecting the withdrawal. Kellermann was delighted and told the Minister it was a *coup de théâtre*. He now held the road to Vitry by Élise and Daucourt, and also the road from Vitry to Châlons, so that the army was not really cut off from the Capital.² This, be it remembered, was the position he had originally intended to take up.³

Till the 30th September the French and Prussian armies faced each other in a more or less acknowledged state of truce, the pause telling most on the Prussians, who suffered severely from want of food and from dysentery.⁴ Meanwhile a contest was going on between Dumouriez, who cared nothing for the threat on Paris and clung to the Argonne, and Kellermann, who wished to make for Châlons and threatened to do so. As the result of an appeal to the Minister, the policy of Dumouriez was upheld and he was given the superior command of both his and Kellermann's armies, but every attention was paid to Kellermann by Fabre d'Eglantine, Danton's confidant, who was visiting the camp, and promised him the *bâton* of Marshal at the end of the campaign. It may have been a provident eye to the future that made the old General ask that, with the *bâton*, might be sent horses and a good light carriage from the king's stables. He may have got the carriage and horses, but he had to wait twelve years for the *bâton*.⁵ On the 30th September Brunswick began his retirement and thus put an end to the strained position of the French commanders. Dumouriez had

¹ Chuquet, *Retraite*, 145.

² Chuquet, *Valmy*, 225-7; *Le Grand*, 113-14.

³ Chuquet, *Valmy*, 187.

⁴ Chuquet, *Retraite*, 108-9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-7, 130-2.

negotiated with the Prussians to obtain their withdrawal from France without fighting, but Kellermann was kept out of the secret, and was shuttlecocked about to prevent his making any attack on the enemy.¹ Not till the 6th October did Dumouriez unfold to him the scheme by which his own army, with the exception of one corps, Dillon's, was to invade Belgium, while Kellermann with the 'Centre' and the Armée des Ardennes (Dillon's corps) was to follow the retreating foe, who had by now gained a good start, to push him gently from French territory, and to retake Verdun and Longwy without bloodshed. Kellermann entered fully into the spirit of these instructions and hardly a moment had passed before he was writing to the Minister, remodelling the map of Europe, giving Prussia the rest of Silesia, crushing the Austrians, and sending a French fleet into the Baltic to attack the Russians. Pretty good work for a General who had been with difficulty restrained from making for Châlons ! Indeed, he was in the highest state of self-congratulation. On the 7th October the Commissioners of the Convention, writing from Sainte-Menehould, said, 'We no longer sing "Ça ira", but "Cela va", and General Kellermann begs us to add "Ça ira all the winter"'. He soon changed his tune.

Meanwhile the programme was carried out ; Verdun and Longwy were surrendered by the Prussians, and on the 23rd October three salvoes from the guns of the 'Moselle'² (as the 'Centre' had been named from the 1st October) told France that her soil was free from the footsteps of the invaders. The 'Ardennes' now marched north to join Dumouriez, and the 'Moselle' returned to its district and was placed in cantonments between Longwy and Saarlouis. The regiment in which Captain Lefebvre served seems to have joined the army from Thionville, and the volunteer battalion of Lt.-Colonel Oudinot apparently moved from Metz to Thionville. With the 'Ardennes' went Ney and Hoche.

¹ Chuquet, *Retraite*, 162-77 ; Phipps, 134.

² Aulard, i. 82.

II

MAYENCE

(September 1792 to June 1793)

Custine. His raid on Speyer, Mayence, and Frankfurt. Beurnonville's march on Trèves. Loss of Custine's conquests.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

1792 6th November. Victory of Dumouriez at Jemappes, followed by conquest of Belgium.

1793 4th January. Second partition of Poland, between Russia and Prussia.

21st January. Execution of Louis XVI.

1st February. France declares war against England and Holland.

16th „ Dumouriez invades Holland.

9th March. France declares war against Spain.

22nd „ The Empire declares war against France.

(The first Coalition: Hungary and Bohemia, Prussia, England, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Tuscany, Naples, The Empire.)

10th March. Rising in La Vendée.

19th „ Defeat of Dumouriez at Neerwinden.

1st-5th April. Treason of Dumouriez.

6th April. *Comité de Salut public* established.

April and May. Successes of the Vendéans.

May. Spanish army enters France by eastern Pyrenees.

I CAN now return to the Rhine frontier and describe the events that had occurred there during the Valmy campaign. By the middle of August Brunswick's advance had relieved the Armée du Rhin from the pressure on its front, and naturally all the schemes for a raid on the left bank of the Rhine again came into favour. Biron and Custine proposed to launch 15,000 men under Custine on Trèves and Thionville, taking the Prussians in rear, destroying their magazines, and forcing them to retreat—a plan that would have suited Dumouriez, who after Valmy, whilst he held the Prussians in their camp, urged Biron to detach a force on the rear of the enemy.¹ Unfortunately both Biron and Custine shrank from the risk, Biron dreading his exposure with the weak force that would have been left him, and preferring the more immediate results of a raid on Speyer. This movement

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 48-52.

might have been the more pleasant to Custine, because it promised him greater independence than he would have had in Dumouriez's theatre of war. The stroke was to be entrusted to him, for Biron was still nervous about Strasbourg.

At this moment Custine was untried and full of ambition. He had many admirable qualities. Gay de Vernon, who served on his staff, describes him as possessing in a high degree the most estimable qualities of a warrior: sober, robust, generous with his own funds, severe, active, careful of the comfort of his men, quick to grasp affairs at a glance, accustomed to the management of troops, and having an excellent knowledge of military administration:¹ liking the advice of well-instructed officers, he knew how to use their opinions skilfully and at the same time to show his gratitude to them.

He had served in the Seven Years War and also under Rochambeau in America, and he had studied military affairs in Prussia, of whose system he was a devout admirer. Soldierlike in appearance, his enormous moustache was so prominent a feature that the men styled him 'General Moustache'. Though he had been strong in advocating the stiff Prussian system, he now devoted himself to inspiring his men, whose love he gained. 'I have never seen', says the cold Saint-Cyr, 'a General so loved.'² Nor was this a passing fancy: it was durable, and the veterans of the 'Rhin' preserved, even after the death of their General as a traitor, a profound remembrance of the commander who had constantly used such 'noble coquetry' to please them. Much as he admired Frederick and the Prussians, he was ready for new manœuvres, and with Dumouriez and Dugommier he was one of the first in the French army to employ skirmishers in large bodies. With all his craving for the applause of his men he was most strict in discipline and shot where Dumouriez and Kellermann only degraded. He was one of the Generals that might have saved the armies from disastrous submission to the Representatives, had Fortune been kinder, but he had great defects, especially an overweening vanity. He did not possess either the talents or the experience of a great commander. His own plans intoxicated him, and blinded him to the dangers to which he was exposing himself.

¹ Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 48-9, 167-8.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 7.

Also he was given to accusing others and so lowering his own rank. But he knew a man when he saw him, and we shall find Saint-Cyr owing his first advancement to his having caught the General's eagle eye.¹

On the 19th September Custine was placed in command of the proposed raid into the States of the Ecclesiastical Electors, the troops being organized as the *Armée des Vosges*, some 14,300 strong. There is often much confusion about this body, which is sometimes called the *Armée du Bas-Rhin*, the *Armée de la Lauter*, the *Armée du Palatinat*, or the *Armée de Custine*, but it must be distinguished from the *Armée du Rhin*, of which it now formed part, for Custine was still under the orders of Biron.² With Custine marched Lieutenant Savary of the 19th Cavalry Regiment, late Royal Normandie,³ and Lieutenant Bernadotte of the 36th Regiment.

On the 29th September 1792 Custine started from Landau northwards, and next day took Speyer and its garrison. On the 5th October Philippsburg was occupied and next Worms. Then, alarmed by a false report of the return of the Prussians, Custine fell back on Edesheim, between Neustadt and Landau. Biron, his superior, wished him not to attempt new adventures, but all France was ringing with his easy triumphs and, taking advantage of Biron's going up the river, he marched on Mayence on the 16th October with but 13,000 men and 45 field guns. On the 21st October the place capitulated. Then, passing across the Rhine, on the 22nd October his troops entered Frankfurt. On the 13th November reinforcements came up to Mayence, and with them Captain Saint-Cyr, serving in the *Compagnie des Chasseurs Parisiens* of the *Section des Quatre Nations*, a most unruly body. Lt.-Colonel Kléber, the second in command of the volunteer battalion of the 4^e Haut-Rhin, also arrived. A little later, probably early in December, Captain Desaix, released from arrest, was again placed on the staff. We thus get here Bernadotte (who had displayed bravery both at Mayence and at Speyer, and who had been promoted *adjudant-major* in his

¹ Général Adam-Philippe, Comte de Custine de Saareck (1740-93). Michaud, x. 386-90; *Biog. des Cont.*, ii. 1151-2; Chuquet, *Custine*, 33-44; Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 47-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 7-8; Lavalette, Part I, 105-6, 128.

² Chuquet, *Custine*, 47.

³ Savary, i, Part I, 3.

regiment on the 30th November), Saint-Cyr, Kléber, Desaix, Lt.-Colonel Clarke of the 2nd Cavalry, *adjutant-major* Soult, and *sous-lieutenant* Lavalette, the future Minister of Posts to Napoleon, who joined a regular infantry regiment at Worms at Easter, 1793.

Success had come quickly and easily to Custine, but it necessarily brought danger with it. Strategically speaking, he had planted his foot near the tail of the column which, under Brunswick, had been making for Paris, and he had to expect soon to have the head turned back on him. On the 8th October, when Brunswick, falling back after Valmy, reached Verdun, the news of Custine's entrance into Speyer arrived, and the Landgrave of Hesse, foreseeing a further advance of the French on Mayence and Coblenz, set off at once at full speed for Kassel. His troops and the Saxons marched day and night to forestall Custine at Coblenz and Ehrenbreitstein, which now lay open. The King of Prussia had burst out laughing when he first heard of the flight of the Landgrave, but the situation in his rear became more dangerous when Custine took Mayence, and the more so because the Austrian contingent had left Brunswick for the Netherlands. Brunswick had to make for Coblenz, which the first Hessian troops reached on the 26th October,¹ but the Prussians moved much more slowly, and it took some weeks more for them to cross the Rhine at Coblenz and to occupy the right bank of the Lahn.²

Custine had escaped one great danger, for a less cautious General than Brunswick would have come up the left bank of the Rhine on his rear. Still he knew that he would be attacked and he wanted more forces. About the 7th November all the troops of the Armée du Rhin had been put under his orders, so that he now commanded his former superior, Biron, who was not even informed of the change.³ But Custine had already drained that army, and now he called loudly for help from Kellermann's Armée de la Moselle, then cantoned between Longwy and Saarlouis, after its return from Valmy. Kellermann, according to Custine, was to put his back against the Armée des Vosges, and to move down the Sarre to Trèves, and thence down the Moselle to Coblenz and to Ehrenbreitstein. The task, Custine

¹ Chuquet, *Retraite*, 187-8, 212.

² Chuquet, *Custine*, 173-6.

³ Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 326; Wallon, iv. 35.

said, was quite easy, so that Kellermann could return the troops he had taken from the Armée du Rhin to Metz in August. Then, when Custine was fully equipped and reinforced, he would do great things along the Rhine.¹

It was under these circumstances that the *Conseil exécutif* on the 24th October had ordered Kellermann to concentrate on the Sarre and to march on Trèves. Apparently it was intended that he and Custine should act together, but formal orders defining the mode and date of the movement should have been given, if neither commander was to be generalissimo. Indeed, it took years before the Revolutionary strategists in Paris discovered the importance of having one commander to supervise all operations in one district, a truth long hidden from them not only by ignorance, but by fear of entrusting too much power to any man. Bonaparte had to put the point strongly to them four years later. Delayed by difficulties of supply, Kellermann moved slowly and it was not till the beginning of November that he had his army collected on the Sarre between Merzig and Saarlouis, whilst he detached a division under Ligneville, succeeded by Destournelle, to Homburg on his right in order to keep in touch with Custine. As for the expedition to Trèves, he balked at it, as his successors Beurnonville and Hoche were also to do.

This caused a violent quarrel between the two commanders.² Kellermann argued that it was too late to forestall the Prussians on the Rhine, and that the country round Trèves was so difficult and so deficient in roads fit for guns that he could not gain on the enemy. His troops required rest, and the volunteers, who had enlisted for the defence of the Capital, seeing it safe, demanded their return to their homes. All this probably was true enough, for the 30,000 men that figured on Kellermann's rolls were not there and the younger Carnot, after seeing Kellermann, considered his objections well founded. On his way to the army Carnot had met a large number of volunteers returning to Paris with their arms: 'I cannot conceal from you that some of these brave soldiers have no shoes, socks, or shirts, and are almost without breeches and coats.' Now, in a carica-

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 145-6; Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 267-74.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 162-3; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 411-14, gives a convenient summary of the dispute between the two commanders.

ture of the time when the Representative had told the men that with bread and lead troops could go anywhere, the soldiers remarked that nothing was said about boots, and, though many soldiers have limped barefoot along the road to victory, the *sans-culotte* system itself has limits, and any Clothing Department would acknowledge that in November a soldier should have breeches. Jomini suggests that, if Custine had come down the left bank of the Rhine, he would have been exposed by the inaction of Kellermann, but this has nothing to do with Kellermann's arguments. The problem he had to face was to march alone, while Custine remained on the right bank, unable to help him. Had Custine agreed to come down the left bank of the Rhine, the whole matter would have borne another aspect.

Dumouriez, now commanding in the north, supported Custine in urging Kellermann forward, and tried to tempt him by visions of the pleasure of municipalizing the district of the Ecclesiastical Electors, believing the old General would take as much pleasure in seeing the rooks fly as did John Knox of evil memory. Dumouriez, who was soon to find that his own army had to halt whether he liked it or not, would not listen to any representation of the state of Kellermann's troops. 'Another pull at the collar, and "Ça ira"', and he wrote to Valence, the commander of the 'Ardennes', in the same spirit. In a few days he had to complain that his own army diminished from day to day in an alarming manner. With or without reason or leave the volunteers crowded home, and it became evident that 'Ça ira' was not the song for winter.¹ Still for the moment, Dumouriez dreamt only of advance, and his authority told against Kellermann. Perhaps he thought differently when Custine demanded that he should march up the Rhine from Bonn with the 'Nord', while Valence with the 'Ardennes' moved on the lower Moselle in support.

The fact was that the whole conduct of the operations of the French against the Prussians had drifted into wrong directions. Originally, when Brunswick had begun his retreat, Dumouriez and Kellermann had been close in his rear, with Custine's Armée des Vosges and Biron's Armée du Rhin on his flank, able to strike at the Prussian supplies at Coblenz. Instead of following Brunswick, Dumouriez had taken the Armée des Ardennes

¹ Chuquet, *Jemappes*, 69-70, 130-3.

and that of the 'Nord', with the Châlons corps, into Belgium to fight at Jemappes, and his hands were full. On the southern flank Custine, instead of moving north against Coblenz, had dashed eastward over the Rhine, and he was now meditating a march into the heart of Germany, so that Kellermann alone remained in the original direction. Brunswick had given every opportunity for a stroke at his communications, for he had retreated very slowly, and when he did reach Coblenz, having no bridge there, he took ten days to cross. Had it really been intended to crush the Prussians during their retreat a general co-operation of the forces of Dumouriez, Kellermann, Custine, and Biron would have been required. Had all these joined, a large force would have cut off Brunswick from the Rhine, or at least would have pushed him hard. Even after Dumouriez had swerved off to Belgium, a combined operation of Kellermann and of Custine along the left bank of the Rhine would have seriously endangered Brunswick's retreat,¹ or, if Custine himself, after gaining Mayence, had, instead of raiding on the right of the Rhine, marched down the left bank of the river on Coblenz, to which his road was clear, he would have cut the enemy's communications.

Every one except Custine himself had expected such a movement: Brunswick feared it, and Biron even advised Custine to sacrifice Mayence itself for the purpose, to ruin its ramparts and to march with his 24,000 men on the Prussian line of retreat.² Jealousy of Kellermann, the senior of the two, under whom he would have had to act in a joint operation, a wish to gather in the money from the rich provinces he occupied, which would buy the favour of the government, many such motives made Custine stick to his conquests on the right bank of the Rhine; and it was from Frankfurt that his complaints against Kellermann really began. Still, whilst urging the march of Kellermann's *Armée de la Moselle* on Trèves and Coblenz, Custine, it would seem, did not intend to stretch out a hand towards it. The approaching danger from Brunswick was telling on him. Violent in language and temper, he broke into the wildest abuse and denunciations of Kellermann and accused him, in a letter to the Minister for War, of incapacity, nullity, and cowardice.

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 143-5, 212, 268-9.

² Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 76-8.

His correspondence, Custine said, proved a base jealousy and the proud intoxication of command: he was unworthy to be called a General, and merited a just punishment: the sword of the law should fall on any man that neglected to strike a death-blow to the enemies of the Republic. Kellermann felt all this more, because he considered he had saved the country at Valmy, while Custine had been engaged in mere plundering expeditions against defenceless cities. Although no drunkard, Custine, always a great braggart, was known to get excited after his dinner, and then to launch out freely in speech. Kellermann therefore retorted that Custine must have written under the influence of madness or of wine. When Custine read this he sprang from his chair, and declared that either Kellermann or he must carry his head to the scaffold. The Gods heard and remembered.¹

Custine won the day and Kellermann was called to Paris, when with curious inconsistency he suddenly announced that his army was in movement down the Sarre. He gave no explanation of this sudden change, which contradicted all his previous arguments and which did not avail him. On the 4th November the *Conseil exécutif*, having considered all the dispatches of Custine, Biron, and Kellermann on the subject of a march along the Moselle to support Custine, as well as the correspondence between Custine and Kellermann, ordered 20,000 men of the 'Moselle' to march on Trèves as soon as possible under Beurnonville. On the 7th November the *Conseil* heard of Kellermann's change of the plan, but it was too late, and the order for his suppression by Beurnonville was maintained. He came to Paris and was heard by the Minister for War and two other Ministers on the 11th November. His explanation, reported to the *Conseil* on the same day, was so far satisfactory that he was not disgraced, but was ordered to start as soon as possible to replace Montesquiou in the command of the Armée des Alpes.² This order was suspended for a time till the dispatches between him and the Austrian Generals had been examined, but on the 26th November he was ordered to start for his new command.³

Whilst Kellermann's delay in advancing on Trèves was the

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 149-51.

² Aulard, i. 223-36; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 413.

³ Aulard, i. 270.

immediate reason for his supersession, dissatisfaction with the undisturbed retreat of the Allies was really at the bottom of the matter. In this the three Generals, Dumouriez, Kellermann, and Custine were all concerned, as well as the Government itself, and of these Kellermann, although the least to blame, was also the least protected. The success of Dumouriez in Belgium and that of Custine at Mayence covered their faults and, though Kellermann had won Valmy, the importance of that battle was not fully appreciated, while part of the credit for it was, justly enough, attributed to Dumouriez. As Kellermann had been the General that actually followed Brunswick, blame naturally clung closest to him. The real cause of the want of activity in the pursuit of course was the instructions of Dumouriez, but Kellermann may not have been inclined to dwell much on them, as they showed his subjection to Dumouriez. Later he attempted to justify himself by alleging that he had had superior forces against him, 90,000 to his 28,000. Apparently he was referring to his strength after Valence had left him, for at first Dumouriez had given him 40,000.¹ The country, he said, was so soaked by the constant rain that his army could not deploy on the plain, and the guns sunk up to their axletrees even on the main roads, which they did not dare to leave.² Of course to a certain extent the roads were as bad for the enemy, but when General Pully made that remark, he forgot that for a pursuing force the roads are worse than for a retreating one.³ A retiring General has a considerable advantage when each road can be treated as a defile. Kellermann's troops also needed reclothing from head to foot, and two days' march ruined their boots.

It is probable that, just as Custine had disliked marching towards Kellermann when that General was senior to him, so Kellermann may not have liked to enter the theatre of operations of Custine when Custine was drawing all the forces in the north of France under his influence. The real defence of Kellermann for his attitude towards Brunswick, now and during the retreat of the Prussians, must be based on other grounds than any difficulty in harrying the enemy. He had been convinced by the arguments of Dumouriez that a bridge of gold should be built for the Prussians, and having seen Dumouriez, with the

¹ These figures are very variable.

² Bricard, 16.

³ Chuquet, *Retraite*, 204.

full or apparent consent of the Government, turn away from the chase to strike at Belgium, why should he, either with 40,000 or with 28,000 men, attempt what Dumouriez had not been made to try with 70,000? He was doubtless also influenced by the fear of a return blow on the part of Brunswick, for few officers at the moment believed that the power of the Prussian army was so completely destroyed as his critics chose to assume, and indeed it was soon driving Custine over the Rhine. Kellermann, however, had both Dumouriez¹ and Custine against him, the first possessing the ear of the Government and the second that of the Jacobins. It must, besides, have suited Dumouriez to have Beurnonville, an obedient lieutenant of his own, in command of an army whose assistance he might want at any moment, rather than Kellermann, who had resented his control and who had steadily opposed his holding the Argonne.

As for the possibility of the expedition to Trèves, events soon justified Kellermann. His successor with the 'Moselle', the great Beurnonville, the 'Republican Ajax', must have been spurred on to Trèves by every possible motive, but his progress was one long wail. No one ought to have been better suited to lead an army, for, by his own account, between May and November 1792 he had delivered 167 combats and had been victorious 167 times. Yet he began by calling the expedition a geographical dream of Custine's, and everything happened as Kellermann had foretold. The volunteers deserted by thousands, and the white-coated battalions of the line were very weak. The weather and the roads were fearful, and the troops, half naked and quite barefooted, dragged their weary way to Trèves only to find the enemy too strong for them. Still this campaign was the finest, on paper, that even Beurnonville had shared in. It was now that he fought a battle, in which he had only to regret the loss of the little finger of a chasseur: the wits at Paris declared that the little finger had not told the whole truth. Indeed, ten or twelve fights of the most terrible nature only cost him seven killed and sixty wounded. By the 4th of December 1792 he was two leagues from Trèves, and, turning round the town, got into part of it. On the 17th December, however, he had to retreat, defying the Devil himself to make war in such a country in winter, a season, however, obviously unsuited to

¹ Chuquet, *Jemappes*, 69-70, 123-4.

his Satanic Majesty. The men were frozen in their tents and the horses, wrote Beurnonville, had twenty pounds of ice on their manes. This was one of the first experiences of Lt.-Colonel Oudinot, with his volunteer battalion. Ajax himself, catching a violent cold, took refuge in a carriage, which was promptly overturned, and he got back a mere skeleton. By the 26th December the army was in cantonments from Thionville to Saarlouis.¹ Eight thousand men had beaten them off. Surely Kellermann had been right, although Custine, on the news of Beurnonville's failure, forgot his own advice and again complained of Kellermann and of his stupidity. Whilst cursing the defender of Trèves, Hohenlohe-Kirchberg, he quaintly admitted that he had 'foreseen the obstinacy of that German head'.² Meantime Custine, left unsupported on the right bank of the Rhine, felt the danger of the position that he still insisted on retaining. Successful as he seemed, in reality he had met but small resistance, but even that had made him feel almost from the first how unsuited his men and his Generals were to meet the most renowned troops of Europe.³ He himself had not enough knowledge of war and he owed much to the advice of his lieutenant, Houchard, who was a bold and capable head of an advanced guard. In his Chief of the Staff, Baraguey d'Hilliers, the patron of Lavalette, he was unfortunate,⁴ and with considerable passion he claimed the services of Berthier, whom he considered as his friend, and his pupil; whose military education he professed to have made, whom he had formed during the American War, and whom he had taken with him on a visit to Prussia. Berthier, he declared, was indispensable to him, no one knew better all details, or how to reconnoitre a country with ease and certainty at a glance. If the Ministers refused him Berthier, it could only be that they wished to get rid of him.⁵ Biron, commanding the 'Rhin', also wanted Berthier. But Berthier, as we have seen, was just the man the Republic would not employ in his proper work: they could only use him in La Vendée in a hesitating manner, as a subordinate not to be trusted.⁶ Another officer whom Custine wanted if he could not

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 158-72; Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 294-304; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 33-4, 44-6; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 89-93.

² Chuquet, *Custine*, 173. ³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 46-7.

⁴ Phipps, 210.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 60; Lavalette, i, Part II, 96, 104.

⁶ Chuquet, *Custine*, 179-80; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 35-6 note 1.

have Berthier, Caffarelli du Falga, was also 'suspect', although the *Comité militaire* wanted to employ him.¹ Both these choices were of men used by Napoleon. To improve his staff Custine took a certain number of Captains whom he attached to the Adjutant-Generals as assistants, and amongst these were Desaix, Kléber, and Saint-Cyr.²

All this time Brunswick had been slowly massing on the right bank of the Lahn, and Custine, who had allowed him to do this unopposed, chose at last to strike at him on the 9th November, when Houchard with the advanced guard took Limburg by a bold stroke. The Prussians, however, then advanced and the army fell back to a position facing Frankfurt, to the west of that town, which the French still held. In order to take up his post at Homburg,³ Houchard had to march all night, and the utter confusion into which his column fell in the darkness had such an effect on Saint-Cyr that ever afterwards he avoided night marching as far as was in his power.⁴ On the 2nd December, whilst one body of the enemy took Frankfurt under Custine's nose, another party under Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen attacked Houchard, who held Ober-Ursel and Kronberg. In this engagement Saint-Cyr's battalion distinguished itself, and by its resistance enabled Houchard to retire on the Nidda, where he found Custine furious at the loss of Frankfurt and of its garrison. Custine now drew back into Mayence, abandoning almost all the right bank of the Rhine, but he chose to make Houchard re-occupy Hochheim, a village close to Kastel, the *tête-de-pont* of Mayence on the right bank.

Custine's men often fought well enough. In one case the King of Prussia remarked a grenadier of a volunteer battalion who, though wounded and left alone, still stuck to the defence of a bridge. By the King's orders the man was taken prisoner and brought to him, when the King said, 'Frenchman, you are a brave fellow ; what a pity you are not fighting for a better cause !' The volunteer was equal to the occasion. 'Citizen William,' said he, 'we shall not agree on that point : let us talk

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 180.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 32, see him also on the state of the army, 36-9.

³ North of Frankfurt, Vogel, xviii.

⁴ Chuquet, *Custine*, 176-85 ; Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 79-83 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 9-11 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 276-92 ; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 76-7, 85-9.

of something else.' The phrase pleased the Prussian army, and the King, when passing along the tents of his men, often heard himself called 'Citizen William'.¹

It was about this time that Custine met Saint-Cyr. The battalion to which the future Marshal belonged was a very unruly one, and had come from Paris threatening to put the army to rights, in a Revolutionary sense. Custine, a strict disciplinarian, disliked the unit : indeed he is said to have broken it up, but I think this is a mistake.² One day Captain Saint-Cyr, a good draughtsman, was amusing himself by sketching this position of Hochheim, when Custine rode by and, seeing the hated uniform, galloped up to the sketcher and tore the paper from his hands. Saint-Cyr, as he says himself, knew how to draw a map of the country with the promptitude necessary in war, and Custine found that he had made a proper sketch of the position. Custine questioned Saint-Cyr, and found his answers so satisfactory that he determined to attach him to his staff, and on the 1st February Saint-Cyr was made an Assistant Adjutant-General, and was employed in reconnaissance until the 11th September 1793, when the Representatives made him Adjutant-General, with the rank of Lt.-Colonel.³ Desaix, who now commenced his lasting friendship with Saint-Cyr, had been made assistant to the staff on the 1st November 1792, and on the 20th May 1793 he anticipated Saint-Cyr in the rank of Adjutant-General, Lt.-Colonel.⁴ Lt.-Colonel Kléber, not yet on the staff, was in the first days of January 1793 in command of posts close to Mayence on the left bank of the Rhine, first at Budenheim,⁵ and then at Mombach :⁶ the knowledge he here gained of the ground round the fortress was soon to be useful to him. On the 6th January the Prussians retook Hochheim, when all active operations ceased until the end of March, Saint-Cyr being employed under Gay de Vernon in fortifying Kastel.⁷

During the winter some important changes took place among

¹ *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 88-9.

² Lavalette, i, Part II, 126-7, but Susane, *Inf. franç.*, makes it merged in the 6th Light later.

³ Lavalette, i, Part I, 126-7 ; Chuquet, *Custine*, 211.

⁴ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 28-30, 372.

⁵ North-west of Mayence.

⁶ North of Mayence, Pajol, *Kléber*, 13-16.

⁷ Gay de Vernon, *Saint-Cyr*, 9 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 23 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 292-4.

the commanders. In December Biron left the 'Rhin', his place being taken by Deprez-Crassier. On the 1st March 1793 the *Conseil exécutif* amalgamated the Armée des Vosges with the Armée du Rhin and gave the chief command to Custine, with Deprez-Crassier as second-in-command. Custine, like Dumouriez, had taken the dangerous course of attacking Pache, the Minister for War, who was dismissed by the Convention on the 2nd February. He was succeeded by Beurnonville,¹ who had not lost his popularity by his failure at Trèves. Indeed, he had much good sense at the bottom of his brag; for instance, he saw through the foolish idea that the population of the districts over the frontier was longing to be free.² Uncertain, perhaps, of his position at Paris, he made the extraordinary stipulation that he should return to the Armée de la Moselle if he ceased to be Minister, and should even retain its command although absent in the Capital. The *Conseil exécutif* actually permitted this, and by its order Lieut.-General Ligniville commanded from the 24th January to the 28th March, and Lieut.-General d'Aboville from the 29th March to the 28th April.³ The 'Moselle' was nominally 50,000 strong, but had in reality only 15,000 infantry and 4,800 cavalry at its disposal:⁴ Destournelle's division was thrown out to Zweibrücken to link with the 'Rhin'.

With Beurnonville at the War Ministry, the question of abandoning Mayence arose, for he and others were in favour of this policy: Custine therefore was called to Paris for consultation. Arriving on the 4th March, he carried the day for the retention of his conquest, and was back with his army soon after the 9th March, in time to learn of the loss of Königstein, a post on the right bank of the Rhine in which he had been unwise enough to leave a garrison.⁵ His position was too much extended for his strength, as he had only 45,000 men, of whom 22,000 were absorbed in Mayence.⁶ Also his left was now exposed, because Destournelle's division was recalled by Beurnonville to the Sarre after pushing forward its posts as far as Lauterecken and the lower Glan.⁷ The Prussians were bent

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 216-20.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 44-8.

³ Chuquet, *Custine*, 231-2 note 2.

⁴ Aulard, iii. 206.

⁵ Chuquet, *Custine*, 228; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 105-6.

⁶ Chuquet, *Custine*, 230.

⁷ Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 119-20.

on getting Mayence, and on the 9th March a body of light troops under Szekuly crossed the Rhine at Saint Goar, but was driven back by Houchard, supported by Custine, an action in which Adjutant-Major Bernadotte must have been engaged.¹ On the 19th March Custine left Mayence and handed over the command there to Doyre, while Meunier was left in charge of Kastel.²

Custine had thought of drawing back to the right bank of the Nahe into the Hunsrück, the mountainous country between the Rhine and the Moselle, where the superior force of cavalry which the enemy possessed would have been paralysed, and where his own troops, unfit for pitched battles, but well able to hold their own in defence of places and defiles, would have been at an advantage. Gay de Vernon and Saint-Cyr had already been sent to reconnoitre the course of the Glan and the important position of Kaiserslautern. Saint-Cyr, fond of such warfare and writing with great knowledge of the country, approved of this plan, but it was given up at once, probably from want of the co-operation of the 'Moselle'.³ Still it was the hope of such support that probably caused Custine to make no sufficient preparations for his retreat, for he left his magazines in Worms, &c., exposed. He now placed his army on the Soonwald, with his right under Neuvinger at Bingen on the Rhine, his centre in front of Kreuznach, and his left under Houchard at Sobernheim on the Nahe, to which river he thus put his back.⁴ Lieutenant Lavalette's regiment, the 93rd, was with the left: Lt.-Colonel Clarke and Adjutant-Majors Bernadotte in the 36th regiment, and Soult in the 1st Haut-Rhin, were with the right.⁵ Captain Saint-Cyr, being on the staff, cannot be placed, but was probably at head-quarters.

Brunswick had moved with exasperating slowness, but at last, on the 21st March 1793, he began passing the Rhine at

¹ Bernadotte's regiment, the 36th, is shown as in Houchard's brigade on the 1st March, Chuquet, *Custine*, 231 note 1.

² Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 116-20; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 41-4; Chuquet, *Custine*, 238-40; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 120-1.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 36-41; Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 120-1.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 43; Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 121; Chuquet, *Custine*, 241-2; Vogel, xvii.

⁵ That is, supposing the distribution in Chuquet, 231, to be reversed, thus reading right for left there.

Bacharach¹ in front of the French army, apparently thinking that such liberties could safely be taken with the Generals opposing him :² on the 27th his troops routed the French right, capturing Neuvinger himself. Indeed the enemy would have been across the Nahe in rear of the rest of the army, had it not been for Lt.-Colonel Clarke, the future War Minister, who, having only one squadron of his regiment, manœuvred with such skill that he persuaded the enemy that he had a fresh regiment in reserve, and stopped their advance.³ Indeed, as a rule the Prussian leaders were caution itself, and a little later one of them, Eben, stopped Colonel Goltz, who wished to throw himself on the retreating French. 'Who ordered you to pursue,' he asked? 'Common sense,' replied Goltz, but as an officer remarked, Eben had the uniform, but not the genius, of Zieten.⁴ Consequently Custine was not pressed at first as he drew off across the Nahe through Alzey to Pfeddersheim, Houchard covering the retreat and halting at Ober-Flörsheim.⁵

On the 30th March Brunswick in person attacked Ober-Flörsheim, and it was important to hold that position to cover the march of a large convoy expected from Mayence. Custine was refreshing himself in the neighbouring village of Flomborn,⁶ and, disbelieving in such haste on the part of the Prussians, he refused to take any steps, cursing the officers sent to him by Houchard. At last Lt.-Colonel Clarke and Colonel Beaujeu persuaded him of the seriousness of the affair,⁷ and he brought up reinforcements. The troops had not always fought well, but this time they played their part manfully. Adjutant-Major Soult was anxious about his volunteer battalion which now came under fire for the first time, but it stood well, although it lost half its numbers from case : Soult himself was specially complimented by Custine. Thanks to the stand made by the troops, and to the fire of his artillery, Custine was able to throw off Brunswick, although the Duke attached much importance to the capture of the position.⁸ This, however, was the only ray

¹ Between Bingen and St. Goar.

² Chuquet, *Custine*, 241.

³ Ibid., 244-5.

⁴ Chuquet, *Custine*, 252.

⁵ On the road from Alzey to Pfeddersheim and Worms.

⁶ NW. of Ober-Flörsheim.

⁷ Chuquet, *Custine*, 253, but I follow Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 127, as to Houchard's being on the field from the first.

⁸ Soult, i. 25-6 ; Gay de Vernon, 126-9 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 47-8 ; Chuquet, *Custine*, 252-4 ; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 124-7, 150.

of light in the retreat. Custine had intended to withdraw part of the garrison and some of the artillery from Mayence, but this column was beaten back into the place. The retreat of the army was continued, at first to Landau, and all the stores collected at Worms and Speyer, which would have been invaluable in Mayence, were burnt. Captain Desaix had all this time been in Worms as assistant to the staff: he had been useful in the sorties made from the place and had refused a promotion which would have taken him from active service to the interior. He now rejoined the army with the former garrison of Worms.¹ Lt.-Colonel Kléber, now an Adjutant-General, remained in Mayence, where he distinguished himself in the defence and in sorties, charged as he was with the command of the outer works.² From this time he practically ceased to have anything to do with the Armée du Rhin.

On the 1st April 1793 Custine re-entered Landau, which he had left five months before full of hopes of victory. He returned depressed and fearing fresh defeats.³ All things told against him, for his raw troops were not fit to bear retreat, and in a few days the news of Dumouriez's treason was known and doubts of his own good faith spread rapidly in the army. Even his favourite A.D.C., Coquebert de Montbret, expressed to the General himself doubts of his fidelity, and a violent scene ensued which ended in the A.D.C.'s trying to blow out his own brains, but only succeeding in wounding himself.⁴ When such things occurred in the staff, small wonder that the men were suspicious of their commander. The men of Bernadotte's regiment insisted on halting on their way to Wissembourg, professing to be exhausted, and their Colonel and the General of Brigade, Isambert, gave way, stopping the march of the column in rear. Then the men set themselves to deliberate on the conduct of Custine and decided that he was a traitor. Custine rode back and, finding what had happened, suspended the Colonel and the General and appointed Ferette as Colonel. This did not please the Captain of grenadiers, Nattes, who declared that Ferette was not to be trusted. A violent scene ended by Nattes declaring he would not serve under the orders of a General who was

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 28-31.

² Pajol, *Kléber*, 18-21.

³ Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 131.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 140-2; Lavalette, i, Part I, 101-4; Chuquet, *Custine*, 260-1.

'suspect', and that he would go to Paris.¹ With officers and men in such temper nothing but disaster could be predicted, and Custine's denunciations of any General that differed from him had done much to weaken his own position and that of all the commanders of armies.

While the 'Rhin' was being driven back up the river from Bingen, Custine naturally proposed that the 'Moselle' should throw all its force on the flank and rear of the enemy, and this probably would have halted Brunswick. Beurnonville at Paris, however, was alarmed by the way in which the house of cards built by Dumouriez in Belgium and Holland was beginning to fall; 'an imposing defensive' was the best system for the moment, and he told Custine that on no account would the 'Moselle' move forwards, while Ligniville was ordered to restrict himself to covering the frontier. Ligniville saw matters in the same light, his business was to cover Lorraine to the north, and, were he to draw off eastwards for the Nahe, the frontier of Lorraine would be abandoned and 'the gates of France open'. In other words, the 'Moselle' would be content if its own front were maintained, although the 'Rhin' was being driven back past its right. Still Ligniville went so far as to reinforce Destournelle at Zweibrücken, and to place that division at the disposal of Custine. Then came the news of the battle of Neerwinden, and Beurnonville, daunted by the evacuation of Belgium, ordered Ligniville to call in Destournelle and to keep only his cavalry in Zweibrücken. All the armies were to remain on the defensive: the business of the 'Moselle' would be to act in concert with the 'Ardennes', which was re-forming at Sedan, and to keep in check the Austrians in Luxembourg. Ligniville being ill, these orders were carried out by d'Aboville, who prepared to fall back on the camp of Fontoy, the original position of the army at the beginning of hostilities.²

Custine, who would have been too happy now to hold his front, was naturally indignant when he saw himself abandoned, and, according to his evil habit, he at once denounced Beurnonville, who he declared was assassinating him. He would no longer correspond with a man of such ignorance, who had neither the virtues nor perhaps the opinions of a Republican; he would only write to the *Comité de défense générale*, who would

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 261-2.

² Chuquet, *Custine*, 248-51.

communicate his dispatches to the Minister.¹ Beurnonville could defend himself, but Custine's accusations also fell on Ligniville and Destournelle, who in the topsy-turvy style of the period were arrested and imprisoned at Paris. However, it soon became clear that the two Generals had only obeyed orders, and they were released, Ligniville being permitted to return home for the time.²

Eventually Custine drew the Armée du Rhin farther back, up the Rhine past Landau to Wissembourg, where he held the lines of the Lauter. He soon became as confident and as boastful as ever, throwing the blame for disaster on others and claiming fresh powers. On the 6th April he was given the superior command of the 'Moselle', along with his command of the 'Rhin'.³ 'It is no longer prayers, it is no longer requests that I shall for the future send you, but it will be orders,' he told d'Aboville. Next, Beurnonville was handed over to the Austrians by Dumouriez, much to Custine's satisfaction,⁴ and on the 29th April Houchard replaced d'Aboville at the head of the 'Moselle'. This was probably done to please Custine; he, however, considered it was a harmful present to Houchard, who, he feared, would fail in the command of an army. Custine certainly could judge men, and he was right in this case, for all who knew the worthy old Houchard considered him as lost when given a charge so much beyond his powers.⁵ Meantime Custine placed his forces well, on the right bank of the Lauter. The 'Moselle' was brought up on the Sarre from Sarreguemines to Saarlouis, with its mass at Saarbrücken.⁶ Between the two armies he placed a new 'Corps des Vosges', under Pully, at Hornbach⁷ to connect the left of the 'Rhin' with the right of the 'Moselle'. This 'Corps des Vosges' must be distinguished from that formerly under Custine and taken from the 'Rhin'. The new body came from the 'Moselle'. On the 5th September 1793 René-Moreaux superseded Pully in command of it, and early in October 1793 the Corps was merged in the 'Moselle'.⁸

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 250.

² Aulard, iii. 205-9; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 102 note 3.

³ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 5.

⁴ Chuquet, *Custine*, 250.

⁵ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 6, 38; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 54-5.

⁶ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 6, 24-5; Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*,

145-6.

⁷ South of Zweibrücken, on the road to Bitche.

⁸ Moreaux, 61.

The fortune of Custine was now at its pinnacle, and he had attained a dangerous elevation, from which he was soon to fall. Though rough with his officers, he had won the affection of his men, but the retreat had cost him much of this, and the volunteers had begun to desert in numbers.¹ Still, he retained the confidence of the Government. Dumouriez had deserted; Dampierre, his successor in command of the 'Nord' and 'Ardennes', had been killed; who but Custine could command the main army of the Republic? On the 13th May he was given the command of the 'Nord' and of the 'Ardennes' in Flanders. The old Diettmann was to succeed him with the 'Rhin', but was to be under the control of Houchard, who was thus to wield both the 'Moselle' and the 'Rhin'. Custine's appointment was the more gratifying to him as it was avowedly based on the fact that the Armée du Nord wished to have him at its head.² Had he succeeded in his new post, had he even acted reasonably, much of the harm done to the Generals by the flight of Dumouriez might have been remedied, and the armies might have been saved from the damage done to them by weak commanders, overawed by the Representatives.

Unfortunately Custine was unreasonable: he committed fault after fault, and the hounds began to close round him. Stricken by the mania that had made Dumouriez and Kellermann believe they could detach the Prussians from the Allies, he had written to Brunswick some complimentary letters, in which the Duke was styled 'Serene Highness'. He had already complained of the interference of the Representatives that were now with him, and they in their turn were shocked at a Republican's using such terms to a Prince.³ Then he continued his attacks on other Generals, not considering how he lowered his own grade. Rightly enough, he had objected to the extension of Houchard's command. 'The conduct of two armies is beyond Houchard's power, and the conduct of one army would be above his power if he were not guided.'⁴ Unfortunately this was published, and Houchard, whilst asking not to be given any command beyond

¹ Chuquet, *Custine*, 233.

² Aulard, iv. 140; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, II.

³ Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 146-52.

⁴ Ibid., 154-6; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 54-5; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 38-9; Foucart-Finot, i. 579.

that of the 'Moselle', felt this slur the more that undoubtedly his advice had been of use to the General that now denied his fitness to command at all. Then Custine could not deny himself the pleasure of attempting one success before he left for the 'Nord'—an attempt that failed. Lastly, when he did go, he had the folly to announce that Mayence could hold out for a long time and with his removal from the Rhine he seemed to lose all care for the town whose capture had seemed so valuable to him, and on whose retention he had risked so much.

On the 17th May, although Diettmann was really in command of the 'Rhin', Custine tried his last stroke with it. Tempted by the fact that part of the force of the enemy had been placed on the right bank of the Queich, he arranged a great movement, in which not only all the troops of the 'Rhin' but those of the 'Moselle' also were employed. Most of the columns were feebly led, as the commanders did not understand their tasks. Custine had just taken as Chief of his Staff General Baraguey d'Hilliers,¹ who made Lavalette his A.D.C.² The new Chief of the Staff did not know his work, and much confusion ensued in the advance,³ especially as it was begun at night. The cavalry of the column that Custine himself led was thrown back on its infantry, when a raw volunteer battalion, alarmed by the sudden appearance of artillery and cavalry in full flight, fired on them and then fled, putting the whole column of 6,000 men to the rout. The men threw away their packs and even their muskets to lighten themselves. Fortunately the scene of the panic was shielded by a hill, so it was not observed by the enemy, and eventually a sufficient rear-guard was formed to cover the retreat.⁴

This action which took place at Bilsheim had important results on the fortunes of some of the officers engaged in it. The 46th regiment had not joined in the rout, but had covered the retreat. Part of the credit for this was given to Desaix, who had stopped the fugitives of his regiment and had rallied them round him. Consequently on the 20th May the Representatives appointed him Adjutant-General, with the rank of Lt.-Colonel.⁵

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 4.

² Lavalette, i, Part I, 104.

³ Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 158-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 56-8.

⁴ Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 156-65; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 55-62; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 12-20; Lavalette, i, Part I, 105-6; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 150-1; Jomini, *Rév.*, iii. 224-7.

⁵ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 31-2, 372.

Lt.-Colonel Clarke had had his horse killed under him, when, taking the musket of one of the dead or of a fugitive, he placed himself in the ranks of a battalion of infantry, with which he remained during the day. One would have thought he might have been better employed, but at this time any exhibition of personal courage was made much of, and on the 17th May Clarke was promoted General of Brigade and given three Dragoon regiments.¹ This action of the 17th May 1793 was the last in which Clarke, made Marshal in 1816, appeared in the field.

To Custine himself this day was most disastrous. His enemies, and he had made many, took advantage of it to represent him as in the same category as Dumouriez, and alleged that he had planned to get his army beaten. Perhaps matters were made worse by the fact that at noon he had been struck with a violent colic and had had to hand over the direction of the retreat to Diettmann, the real commander of the army. Sick in mind and body, he threw the blame with some justice on Ferrier, who had commanded the right by the river, and, advancing with the utmost slowness, had never really come into action. Brought face to face with Custine, Ferrier held firm, declaring that Diettmann was the commander; Custine had no authority over him. Ferrier was a dangerous enemy, for he was in correspondence with the Minister of War, Bouchotte, and with such men as Ronsin, Hébert, and Vincent, the crew that was engaged in hunting down the Generals. Naturally suspicious, Ferrier denounced Custine as he did Beauharnais when that General took command, and all this told at Paris, where Ferrier sent his Adjutant-General, Cousso, to support his accusations.² Ferrier and Cousso ended by being denounced by their own men and were suspended. Many years afterwards, when Saint-Cyr, at this moment only Captain on the Staff, had become Marshal, and Minister of War to the Bourbons, Cousso appeared at his audience and was at once surrounded by a number of angry officers who had belonged to this Armée du Rhin. Amongst these was the honest old Rapp, who was first and most violent in reproaching the denouncer of Custine. Dismayed with his

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 61-2; Lavalette, i, Part I, 108; Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 163; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 19; *Fastes*, ii. 269.

² Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 164-8; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 61, 70; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 19-23.

reception by his former comrades, Cousso left the *salon* without seeing the Marshal, much to the satisfaction of the latter. With all his conceit, arrogance, and violence, Custine, let it be said to his credit, had made himself friends ready to defend his honour more than twenty years after he had ascended the scaffold. Houchard we have already met in command of the 'Nord'. A former Colonel of cavalry, he had done well in the operations under Custine, whose right-hand man he had been, and he was proportionately annoyed when the dispatch from Custine appeared in the papers in which his former commander prophesied that this promotion would be a 'funeste présent' to him, and that, good as he might be as an advanced guard commander, he feared he would fail at the head of an army¹—an opinion but too well grounded. On the 29th April 1793 Houchard took up his new post.² In June came an affair, or rather a battle, without result, but interesting to us as one of the Marshalate was concerned. Kilmaine, who was commanding the Armée des Ardennes, a small force of about 8,500 men, which he had collected round Sedan, proposed a joint operation with the 'Moselle', to move on Liège and so cause the Allies to raise the sieges of Valenciennes and Condé. Whilst Kilmaine himself marched north from Givet for Liège, his lieutenant, Beauregard, would move eastwards on Arlon. Here the 'Moselle', coming by Ligny, would join in and the combined force, taking the store which the enemy had collected in Arlon, would then march north on Liège. Houchard, however, was unwilling to abandon the frontier he was watching, and would only make a point on Arlon. Delaage, whom he meant to send, was not to pass beyond that town, but was to fall back after disquieting the enemy for two days.³

Delaage advanced with 10,500 men, amongst whom was the light infantry battalion of Captain Lefebvre. Kilmaine himself was halted by his superior, Custine, now commanding the 'Nord', but he sent Beauregard with 2,000 men. On the 7th June 1793 Delaage met the enemy short of Arlon: his advanced guard, two regiments of cavalry, and his light infantry were overborne and thrown back. Next day he was about to retreat when Beauregard joined, and on the 9th June the combined

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 27.

² Chuquet, *Custine*, 231-2 note 1.

³ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 27-8.

force attacked the Austrians in front of Arlon and drove them off after a severe fight, in which Sorbier's¹ horse artillery battery was prominent, and in which the enemy lost three guns.² This battle had no real effect, as the French withdrew, but Lefebvre had distinguished himself. On the 3rd September of this year, when he was promoted Lt.-Colonel, Adjutant-General, his regiment gave him a certificate for the honourable and distinguished manner in which he had fulfilled the duties of Adjutant-Major of the battalion in the Trèves campaign, with as much zeal and intelligence as at the affair of Arlon.³

¹ Général Comte Jean-Barthélemot de Sorbier (1762-1817), *Fastes*, iii. 559.

² Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 26-35; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 162-4.

³ Wirth, 65-6.

III

DESAIX AND SAINT-CYR

(June to October 1793)

Alexandre de Beauharnais. Failure to relieve Mayence. Friendly rivalry of Desaix and Saint-Cyr. The 'Rhin' driven back on Strasbourg.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

29th May. Revolt of Lyons.

2nd June. Fall of the Girondins.

12th July. Condé taken by the Allies.

23rd July. Spanish army thrown back over the Bidassoa.

28th July. Valenciennes taken by the Allies.

8th September. French victory at Hondschoote, and relief of Dunkirk.

11th September. Le Quesnoy taken by the Allies.

21st September. Spanish victory at Trouillas.

27th September. English and Spanish fleets enter Toulon Harbour.

17th October. Defeat of Vendéans at Cholet.

THE Armée du Rhin was fast falling on evil days, from which nothing but a victory, so decisive as to give its commander full prestige, could have saved it. Instead of that came the tragedy of Beauharnais, the husband of Joséphine, the future Empress. The old Diettmann had wisely refused the burden of the command of the army, pleading that he, a cavalry officer, knew nothing of infantry; a wise course which enabled him to die in quiet, and not on the scaffold. The choice of the Representatives fell on Beauharnais.¹ Only thirty-three, active, gallant, talented, with every advantage of presence and address, he had given full pledges to the Revolution, of which he was a devoted admirer. He had been a Deputy of the *noblesse* in the *États généraux*, and had been President of the National Assembly at the time of the flight to Varennes. Then he had served in the 'Nord' and had been a capital Chief of the Staff to Biron when that officer commanded the 'Rhin'. Unfortunately he wanted both the habit of war and the self-confidence that could have carried him to victory.² Fortune seemed to desire to snatch

¹ Général Vicomte (Alexandre) de Beauharnais (1760-94), father of Eugène and Hortense de Beauharnais. His elder brother, François, Marquis de Beauharnais (1756-1847), was ambassador under the Empire.

² Michaud, iii. 627; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 42-4; Masson, 48-200.

him from his danger by offering him means of escape. Houchard, in command of the 'Moselle', wished to exchange armies with him, but he preferred to remain with the 'Rhin', where he was known and with whose district he was acquainted.¹ Then, when the War Minister, Bouchotte, denounced on all sides, and alarmed at the storm which threatened to break on the Convention at the end of May,² resigned his office, the Convention on the 13th June nominated Beauharnais to be Minister, and Houchard to succeed him with the 'Rhin'.³ Unfortunately for himself and for France, Beauharnais declined on the grounds that his talents did not equal his zeal; he would avoid eminent posts; he did not wish to throw himself into the storms of a revolution at a time when the Constitution was not firmly established.⁴ Had he accepted the Ministry, with his zeal, he would have saved France from the disorganization into which the armies were thrown by Bouchotte, who was always more engaged in spying on and denouncing the Generals than in sending them supplies and reinforcements. His refusal decided that question: on the 22nd June he was again given the command of the 'Rhin',⁵ and Bouchotte, saved by the revolution of the 31st May, resumed the office which he was to hold until all the Ministries were abolished on the 20th April 1794.⁶ Under his rule commander after commander went to the scaffold.

Beauharnais, born in Martinique, had married another Creole, Joséphine, on the 13th December 1779. He was then a Captain. Two children had been born to him, Eugène on the 3rd September 1781, and Hortense on the 10th April 1783. In 1785 the couple had made a formal separation.⁷ It is, by the way, curious that both the husbands of Joséphine should have been connected with La Fère, Beauharnais having been Major in the infantry regiment of La Fère,⁸ and Bonaparte having begun his service in the artillery regiment of La Fère.⁹ It is also curious that Captain Bonaparte about this very time was applying to

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 27.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 109.

³ Aulard, iv. 526, 544.

⁴ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 44-5.

⁵ Aulard, v. 25, 48.

⁶ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 109-10. Robespierre supported Bouchotte, Hamel, iii. 34-5.

⁷ Masson, 137-51.

⁸ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 42; Susane, *Inf. franç.*, i. 311.

⁹ Susane, *Art. franç.*, 278.

be posted to the 'Rhin' as Lt.-Colonel of artillery, but this may have been just after Beauharnais had left the army.¹ In another way there was an approximation between the two men: Custine had taken with him to the 'Nord' his Chief of the Staff, Baraguey d'Hilliers,² the patron of Lavalette, who remained with the 'Rhin'. To fill the post of Chief of the Staff the Representatives chose Clarke, whom we have just seen promoted General of Brigade. This was a good choice. Clarke, says Lavalette, besides having a taste for staff work and experience of it, possessed all the suppleness of a man who wished to succeed in life, and also (Oh Ireland!) 'cette espèce de conduite dont on accuse les gens de son pays'.³

The immediate task of the 'Rhin' and of the 'Moselle' was to relieve Mayence, long besieged by the Prussians. A bold advance would have saved the place, for the enemy could not afford a large covering force, and with the 60,000 of the 'Rhin' and the 40,000 of the 'Moselle' Beauharnais could have thrown 100,000 men on them. At first Houchard was not ready and, when the two armies did move, Beauharnais lost time in endless consultations and in making serious attacks on unimportant posts. At last, just when success seemed near, the enemy announced to the two commanders that Mayence had capitulated on the 23rd July. The rough old trooper Houchard refused to believe the news, assuring the Duke that he had a mistress in the town whom he was determined to visit,⁴ but the loss was soon confirmed. The place was not really at the end of its powers of resistance, but Beauharnais had failed to let the garrison know of his advance, and the Representatives inside feared lest they should have to surrender at discretion and so accepted the mild terms offered, by which the troops of the garrison were not made prisoners of war, but were only restricted from serving against the Allies for a year. Some sixteen thousand men were thus set free to be used by France against the Vendéans.⁵ The garrison came out in two columns, the first led

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 159.

² Gay de Vernon, *Custine et Houchard*, 168.

³ Lavalette, i, Part I, 108; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 62.

⁴ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 57.

⁵ Chuquet, *Mayence*, 303, 308; Pajol, *Kléber*, 16-27; Vaxelaire, 25-8; Musset-Pathay, 255-96; *Vict. et Conq.*, i. 204-9; Jomini, *Rév.*, iii. 209, 253, and Atlas xiii.

by Dubayet and Kléber, and marched into the interior, watched by Soult and others with consternation.¹ Kléber and the other leaders in the siege expected some acknowledgement of the success they considered they had obtained, and were proportionately disgusted when they found themselves arrested and kept under sight by gendarmes.² This force became the Armée de Mayence in La Vendée.

On the first shock of the news of the surrender indignation had been directed against the garrison, but the blame soon passed to the relieving force and especially to Beauharnais. There was some excuse for him and Houchard, as Custine, who of all men should have known the facts, had declared that the place was provisioned for a year and that at the worst it could hold out for six months, whereas it had stood only for less than four.³ Also at the end of May, when he was in command of the 'Nord', he had proposed a great plan, by which the 'Rhin' and the 'Moselle' were to be drained of part of their troops in order to swell his forces for operations in the north, at the end of which, in August, Mayence was to be relieved. The Ministers had approved of this plan, and it was only the firm resistance of Beauharnais, Houchard, and the Representatives with their armies that had stopped its being carried out. Houchard, stung by Custine's letter that declared him unfit to command, had offered a bitter opposition to his former chief on this plan, and Beauharnais had been equally strong, especially on the necessary renunciation of the immediate relief of Mayence.⁴ The two Generals had triumphed, but the very fact that Custine and the Government had assumed the absence of necessity for haste in the relief may well have told on them.

Houchard on the 3rd August passed to the important command of the Armée du Nord, and on the 5th August was succeeded with the 'Moselle' by Schauenbourg, whom we have seen as Chief of the Staff to the 'Centre' during the Valmy campaign. Schauenbourg's talents fitted him, as he said, to be an instructor, but not to command an army, and he energeti-

¹ Soult, i. 33-4.

² Pajol, *Kléber*, 26; Chuquet, *Mayence*, 296-8.

³ Chuquet, *Custine*, 265-6; Chuquet, *Mayence*, 306-8.

⁴ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 35-41; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 118-20; Aulard, iv. 484, 492-3, and v. 5, 18-19.

cally, though unsuccessfully, resisted his new appointment. Beauharnais apparently might have kept his position, for the time when defeat meant death to the Generals had not yet fully come. The immediate responsibility for the loss of the place was put on Custine, and he went to his death. Beauharnais might yet have tried a stroke, and the anxiety of the enemy to announce the fall of the place pointed to their not feeling certain of being able to repulse the relieving force : otherwise they would have been too happy for the French to have come on in ignorance of what had happened. As it was, both armies fell back in consternation, almost in flight, Houchard to the line of the Sarre, Beauharnais to Wissembourg.¹ This destroyed all Beauharnais's hold over his army. The troops had chafed at the long delay in the advance, and had gone forwards vowing it was for 'Mayence ou la mort'. They had never given their confidence to Beauharnais : now, when he tried to harangue them, he was so badly received that he felt it was impossible to remain in command.² It must have been a bitter disappointment for him. He had been praised by the old Luckner and by Custine : Biron had considered him the best Chief of the Staff one could have,³ yet the weight of command had crushed him (as it crushed so many Generals), cowed as is a young colt sometimes at the sight of the crowded course on which he has to compete.

Now he fell into the most complete prostration of mind and body, and from the 3rd August besieged the *Comité* and the Representatives with pathetic appeals to be permitted to resign. With much truth he alleged that, belonging to the class of Nobles, against which opinion was now rising, he could not command confidence, and he begged to be permitted to serve in the ranks as a private soldier. The *Comité* represented that the complete annihilation of all his powers, mental and physical, determined him to resign, and he proposed that Landremont, who had distinguished himself lately, should replace him. The Representatives were for long unwilling to lose him, for, doing justice to the purity of his principles, they considered that he was the first General of the Republic. He became so ill that

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 52-8; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 69-70; Jomini, *Rév.*, iii. 252.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 72.

³ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 43-4.

Landremont did take command temporarily, but the crisis came when Beauharnais began to send his heavy guns and treasure to the rear for safety. The troops cried out against retreat, and on the 23rd August the Representatives at last replaced him by Landremont. The *Comité* had already accepted his resignation on the 21st.¹

Ordered, according to the formula of the time, to withdraw twenty leagues from the frontiers and from Paris, Beauharnais went first to his own place near Blois, La Ferté-Beauharnais, now la Ferté-Aurain. The local Jacobins received him most warmly, and he became President of the Jacobins of Chaumont, the chief place of his Canton.² Now that he was relieved from the crushing burden of command, he again became active and believed himself safe. As, however, the Terror increased, his name was recalled at Paris; on the 2nd March 1794 the *Comité de sûreté générale* ordered him to be arrested, and on the 14th he was lodged in the Carmes in Paris.³ There, apparently on the 21st April, he was joined by his wife Joséphine, for whom there was no room in the prison of the 'Anglaises'. Beauharnais died, and, at least nominally, not for his errors as General, but for an alleged conspiracy amongst the prisoners in the Carmes, one of the convenient pretexts for slaughtering batches of prisoners during the Terror.⁴ On the 22nd July he was removed to the Conciergerie, a prison which was but the stepping-stone to the scaffold.⁵ As he passed out of the Carmes he handed to Madame de Custine his ring, an Arabian talisman. Hope was gone: his trial on the 23rd July turned merely on the absurd 'conspiracy', and his head fell. In four days Robespierre died, and the Terror ceased.

Had Beauharnais lived, no doubt he would have been employed again. Bonaparte, at this time a General of Brigade in command of the artillery of the Armée d'Italie under Dumerbion, was returning to head-quarters at Nice from a mission to

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, 154-8; Masson, 204-7; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 110-12; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 173; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 70-3.

² Masson, 223-6.

³ For the Carmes see Dauban, *Les prisons de Paris sous la Révolution*, Paris, Plon, 1870; Lenôtre, *Paris révolutionnaire*, Paris, Perrin, 1896, pp. 162-71; Drumont, *Mon vieux Paris*, Paris, Flammarion (n.d.), p. 47.

⁴ Wallon, *Trib. Rév.*, v. 78-9.

⁵ For the Conciergerie see Dauban; Lenôtre, 336-72; Beugnot, i. 190-279.

Genoa.¹ He would still in due time have received the command of 'Italie', but would not have married Joséphine. Had his choice fallen on some woman neither so graceful nor so clever, but with a heart, it would have been better for him and perhaps for Europe. As it was, Beauharnais left a letter to his wife, calling on her to endeavour in future days to rehabilitate his memory,² for to him as to so many of the Generals that were victims of the Revolution, one of the most bitter drops in his cup was the thought that he would go down to posterity as a traitor to the Republic for which he had made such sacrifices. This was not a work that Joséphine ever undertook. Carnot would seem to have signed the order which was practically his death-warrant.³

Landremont, the successor of Beauharnais, was like him an officer of the *ancien régime*, having thirty-five years' service, almost all passed in one Dragoon regiment, and he had seen seven campaigns. He had small experience of high command, for one year had carried him first to Colonel and then through the grades to the command of an army.⁴ Neither he nor his Chief of the Staff, Clarke, who retained that post, had sufficient experience, and the army had been weakened by sending 11,000 or 12,000 men to Houchard with the Armée du Nord, so that it now had 45,000 men only, besides 39,000 in the garrisons and in the *division du Haut-Rhin*, which Pichegru commanded. Captain Bernadotte passed to the Nord with the 1st battalion 36th regiment.⁵ Saint-Cyr, at this moment assistant to the Adjutant-General Montrichard, now won his first success as a commander. The *division des montagnes*, the left of the army, held the gorges of the Lauter to prevent any turning movement on that flank. D'Arlande, its General, was declared by the Representative to be a good officer, but, probably distrusting his own fate as a Noble, he deserted to the enemy, and his place fell to Ferey, whom the Representatives had pitchforked from Adjutant-Major to General of Brigade before he had seen the enemy. Landremont distrusted his capacity, but did not dare

¹ Jung, *Bonaparte*, ii. 437-41.

² Masson, 234-5.

³ Wallon, *Trib. Rév.*, v. 91.

⁴ Général Charles-Hyacinthe le Clerc de Landremont (1739-1818), Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 113-14; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 72-3.

⁵ Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 74; Dupuis, *Nord*, 271-85; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 63-7; Soult, i. 57-8.

to remove a man favoured by the Representatives. On the 12th September 1793, while Landremont was attempting to make a diversion by passing the Rhine at Breisach and at Kehl, the Austrians attacked the left at Bundenthal and drove it from that position. Landremont, caught with his troops scattered, might now well have been driven from the lines of the Lauter.¹

Saint-Cyr was always fond of hill warfare, for it gave him chances for the concealed strokes in which he was so skilful. Landremont, at first in despair, believing that the treachery of D'Arlande had delivered up the post, at last determined to retake the position and to send up four battalions as a reinforcement. Who was to command this reserve? Saint-Cyr at that moment happened to pass by the window, and one of the staff pointed him out as the man that best knew the position and the importance of the posts in the mountains, as he had been employed in the reconnaissances of them. Landremont at once sent him on in advance of the battalions to give advice to Ferey. Passing through Lembach, where the battalion of Captain Soult was posted,² Saint-Cyr stopped the preparations that were being made for retreat, and then met Ferey, who had abandoned Nothweiler and was hurrying back for Lembach. Saint-Cyr persuaded him to defend the ground foot by foot, and then, going on himself, found the enemy was not in pursuit. Returning to Lembach, he found his four battalions and Landremont listening in disgust to the explanations of Ferey and of the late Chief of the Staff to D'Arlande. The troops were too tired to do more, but Landremont promised the four battalions they should fight next day. Disgusted with the late retreats, the men grumbled that it would be as usual, marching everywhere, but never fighting. They, however, showed their pleasure when Landremont promised them that they should not only fight, but fight under Saint-Cyr, whom they praised.³

Taking Saint-Cyr back with him to Wissembourg, Landremont presented him to the Representatives as the man whom he could

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 143-7 (see 147 note 2, Général Claude-François Ferey); Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, 82-8, 91-2, and plan, p. 119; *ibid.*, Atlas, Plates ii and ii bis; Bittard des Portes, 99-101; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 157; Le Grand, 153-4; Vogel, xxii.

² Soult, i. 59-60.

³ Lavalette, i, Part I, 127-8; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 87-91; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 147-50.

most trust to retake the position, and demanded that he should be made Adjutant-General, so as to command next day without hurting the feelings of the Lt.-Colonels and Colonels with the troops. Promotion was a doubtful boon when it might lead so quickly to the scaffold, and Saint-Cyr declined the rank, suggesting that Montrichard should be sent, when he would naturally accompany him as his assistant. Landremont, however, insisted, and at midnight on the 11th September Saint-Cyr was made Adjutant-General with the rank of Lt.-Colonel.¹ Going to Lembach, he could get no information from Ferey or the late Chief of the Staff to the division. Then he had to wait for the reinforcements sent him, which came up battalion by battalion from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m., and which attacked independently. Gathering up this straggling flock, Saint-Cyr waited for the next day, whilst the enemy remained confident that they had beaten him off, and refused reinforcements. Wurmser, often impetuous enough, never thought of throwing his weight on this flank and so driving the French from the Lauter.²

The story of the fight on the 14th September, arranged characteristically enough by Saint-Cyr, should be read in the memoirs of that Marshal. Mallet, the future contriver of the marvellous plot of 1812, who this day fought whilst tormented by a violent toothache, was to attack the left of the enemy and try to draw them from their strong position. A battalion of the National Guard from Toul, the birthplace of Saint-Cyr, composed of married men, was kept out of harm's way, whilst two raw battalions of the levy, armed only with pikes, were also kept in the rear, but still a little nearer than the Toul battalion, as they were only single men. A tiny four-pounder was hoisted on a hill commanding the Austrian position, and was kept concealed. Then, after a long teasing attack, during which the enemy kept his ground, but suffered a good deal, Saint-Cyr launched his men on the hill-top, the gun suddenly opened fire, and a small body of cavalry charged. In this attack Captain Soult directed two battalions. Taken by surprise, the enemy gave way and fled up the valley for Dahn, and, had it not been for the appearance of a force sent by Brunswick, the French

¹ See Gavard, 25, for date.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 91-6; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 150-2; Bittard des Portes, 101-4.

would have got their guns and baggage. The French had lost ninety men, killed and wounded: the Austrians more than seven hundred.¹

There is almost always something quaint, often something whimsical, in Saint-Cyr's accounts of his engagements, for he looks on everything from the point of view of the military artist. The most cold-blooded of Generals, he always had an eye for spectacular effect, and the sudden opening of his one gun, and the charge of his few horse, are quite in the style in which he fought the Russians at Polotsk in 1812, winning thereby the too-long delayed *bâton*. Also the whim by which he preferred rather to use the young men's pikes than the married men's muskets reminds us of the time when, to the anger of Napoleon, he chose to fight the Spaniards without using his artillery. It would be cruel to urge that the Toul battalion, whose merits he boasts,² was not after all so wonderful a body.³ While Saint-Cyr has given us a full account of this affair, in which, naturally enough, he does not mention Soult, then a mere Captain, it is curious that Soult has given us a short account, in which he does not mention Saint-Cyr, but gives all the credit to Ferey, or, as he calls him, Ferette.⁴

Both Nothweiler and Bundenthal were reoccupied, and the left of the army was once more safe. Praise was showered on the men and on the commanders: Landremont wrote to Saint-Cyr that he was in the seventh heaven of delight and that it was one of his lucky days when he had given the division to Saint-Cyr. Then he and the Representatives visited the field, which was such a one as Napoleon loved to see, every man (dead, be it understood) in his place. Landremont was also pleased at finding the two raw battalions now armed with muskets taken from the Austrians. One would like to know what he thought of the Toul battalion when he passed before that much-married body.⁵ Part of the troops they had met came from the *émigré* army of Condé, and one of them, the Chevalier de Mauny, was taken prisoner and was shot next day. He had been on his way

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 97-105 and Atlas, ii and ii bis; Soult, i. 60-1; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 149, 154-6; *Vict. et Conq.*, ii. 34-5; Bittard des Portes, 104-8; Vogel, xxii.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 80.

³ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 120 note.

⁴ Soult, i. 59-61.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 104-5; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 156-7.

to hospital, when, hearing the guns, he left the wagon and, shivering with fever, took his place in the ranks. He died bravely, raising his hat with its white cockade and crying, 'Vive le Roi, vivent les Bourbons'.¹ Was Voltaire right when he declared that, if two Frenchmen met at the end of the earth, one must eat the other; it was a law of Nature?² Adjutant-General Saint-Cyr must have looked on, never dreaming that the Marquis de Saint-Cyr would be a Minister of these Bourbons, to serve whom now meant the death penalty.

Landremont, obviously a man of sense, now selected the young General of Brigade Desaix to be employed at Nothweiler, not only as a good officer, but also as a friend of Saint-Cyr's; and, understanding the importance of the position amongst the mountains, he hoped much from the co-operation of the two men. Thus these two began to have great influence over the fortunes of the Armée du Rhin, as they had later over those of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Friends always, they were always rivals and opponents, almost inevitably so when each commanded a wing, for, as Napoleon complained, every General tends to believe the important point of the battle or of the campaign to be where his own particular command is situated. If Saint-Cyr considered that the weight of the army should be thrown on his side, Desaix was pretty sure to believe his was the threatened wing. It is time to attempt a description of the two men who had so much influence over the campaigns on the Rhine frontier.

Desaix, the Chevalier de Veygoux, as at first he styled himself, in order to be distinguished from his brother Desaix, was *noble* and had been trained as an officer of the *ancien régime*. Passing through the College of Effiat, part of the *École royale militaire*, he was commissioned at fifteen as a *sous-lieutenant* in the infantry regiment of Bretagne, later the 46th regiment.³ When General Mathieu Dumas came in 1791 to visit Strasbourg, Desaix was in the garrison, and became A.D.C. for the time to Mathieu Dumas.⁴ Later he became A.D.C. to General Victor de Broglie, and, as we have seen, was imprisoned as 'suspect'.

¹ Bittard des Portes, 108-9; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 157-8.

² Thiébault, i. 51.

³ Susane, *Inf. franç.*, i. 311, 371; *ibid.*, iv. 114-15. At the first numbering of the regiments Bretagne was 47th but became 46th when Le Roi (the 23rd) was broken up in 1791. Susane, *Inf. franç.*, i. 319.

⁴ Mathieu Dumas, i. 485-6; *Fastes*, i. 296.

His family took the Royalist side, and two of his brothers served in the Armée de Condé, but Desaix himself remained faithful to the principles of the Revolution, replying to the entreaties of his mother and her assurances of the 'eternal disgrace' he would incur if he remained in the service of the Republic, 'At no cost will I emigrate. I do not wish to serve against my country. I wish to remain and get advancement in the army. No, never shall I emigrate.'¹

Always 'suspect' under the Terror and often in danger, his military knowledge and his readiness to accept promotion carried him rapidly up. He became Captain on the 23rd May 1792, and was appointed Assistant on the Staff on the 1st November of the same year, and Lt.-Colonel Adjutant-General the 20th May 1793, jumping to General of Brigade on the 20th August, and General of Division the 20th October 1793; whilst Saint-Cyr did not become Lt.-Colonel Adjutant-General till the 11th September.² Thus Desaix's rise was not impeded by the fact that he was connected with men serving in Condé's *émigré* army, although even Saint-Cyr believed he was inclined to avoid striking at that force when it could be avoided.³

Desaix had Savary, the future Minister of Police, on his staff for some time before taking him as his A.D.C., and he knew Rapp, who was to occupy the same post with him: these two A.D.C.'s served him till he died at Marengo. His smiling admirer, Lavalette, has left us a half-jocose portrait of him. Tall and of a striking countenance, his long black hair, by which his corpse was to be identified at Marengo, contrasted strongly with the high colour of his face and the extreme whiteness of his teeth. A wound received on the 20th August 1793 had given him a hare-lip, which rather interfered with his speech.⁴ He was shy and unaccustomed to society, and seemed something like a savage from Orinoco who had been dressed up as a Frenchman. Though usually reserved, if once he were drawn out, he spoke softly, charming every one by the variety of his information and the simplicity of his manners. The direct opposite of Hoche and others, he was clear of the obscenity of camp or barrack life; an indecent expression made him blush, and, though he smiled at the *amours* of his young staff, he never

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 7.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 146.

² *Ibid.*, 372-3.

⁴ Le Grand, 206-7.

participated in them. He was always careless about dress, to an extent that scandalized even Saint-Cyr, whom one would have thought slack enough on that point. Lavalette says he never saw him in uniform, but always wearing a blue coat with no embroidery, the sleeves of which were so short that his staff declared it must have served at his first Communion. Even in visiting his outposts he often had no sword. Under the heaviest fire he was imperturbable, and his gay demeanour enheartened others.¹ It does not, however, need much description by contemporaries to make us believe in the attraction of a man who always remained friends with Saint-Cyr, who was the trusted counsellor of such different men as Pichegru and Moreau, and who was esteemed by Bonaparte. He enjoyed the stories and tricks of his men, and had composed a whole volume of tales on this subject, which he delighted to read aloud. One evening after a fight, visiting a bivouac, he met two of his soldiers carrying a litter, and, as he stopped in their path, they asked him to make a little room for a wounded man. A covering over the litter seemed to be laid above a body, and Desaix stepped aside, but, remarking that the wounded man seemed to have a very long nose and very short legs, he raised the cover and found the corpse was that of a dead pig, their booty. At another time he met a grenadier, very drunk, who, whilst staggering along, addressed his stomach, which was giving signs of rebellion, 'Red and white, red and white, if you don't get on together I'll turn you both out of doors.'²

In one point Desaix differed not only from Saint-Cyr but from almost all other officers: at this time when, either from distrust of their untried powers or from a feeling that the troops were still uncertain, or from fear of the danger that came with promotion, the higher posts were avoided by the class of men usually most avid of them, Desaix was eager to come to the front.³ It was a great thing to lead a division, but he liked the command of one all the more when it was called the *avant-garde*.⁴ The same note in his character was to be shown later, when in 1797 he abandoned not only Moreau, whose favourite counsellor

¹ Lavalette, i, Part I, 125-6, 133.

² Thiébault, ii. 198-9.

³ 'Je veux demeurer et avancer dans l'armée', Bonnal, *Desaix*, 7.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 135.

he had been, but also the Rhine army where he was loved (and to change from one army to another willingly was strange then), avowedly because he believed more glory was to be won under Bonaparte than under Moreau, successful as that commander had been. Love of Glory, indeed, Saint-Cyr gives as his chief characteristic.¹ This need not be styled ambition : let us call it the natural wish of a clever man to be placed where his talents might have full scope for use. But, if he was so minded under the Republic, where victory had so little to give to a General, what would he have been had he lived under the Empire, when almost every one was engaged in the great race for honour and wealth, and when success brought such boundless possibilities ? The touch of chivalry which, without being able to define one's grounds, one feels to have existed in his character, would have saved him from the sordid side of the Empire, but he must have risen high. 'I would have made him a Prince,' said Napoleon, and this one can well believe, but not such a Prince as Bernadotte, Ney, Masséna, or even Davout.

As for Saint-Cyr, surely the study of his character is more enticing than that of any other Marshal ! In the first place we have his memoirs, and what can be more delightful than when a master of war tells not only his actions but also his reasons for them, and when he criticizes his comrades and his enemy ? The rapture of battle, the delight of success, such feelings one expects in a soldier, but Saint-Cyr enjoyed the whole Art of War in a way given to few men. A mere brutal fight, a soldiers' battle, however victorious, had no charm for him. To feel the pulse of the enemy, keeping his touch on that of his own men, to weigh idiosyncrasies of foe and of comrade, sometimes even to grant the hostile army just enough advantage to lure it to its ruin, and then to strike the blow with the exact weight sufficient ; in such things Saint-Cyr delighted. In 1794 he reckoned on the surprise of the enemy in finding his men seated, just as at Polotsk in 1812 he was to calculate the precise number of hours his weak troops could stand on the field. All things weighed, all things calculated, everything prepared, then came his stroke—sharp, sudden, and sent home with all his force, like that of the fencer he was at heart.

Perhaps with such qualities went accompanying defects.

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 192. 'Il aimait la gloire avec passion', Marmont, i. 138.

However great was his insight on the actual field, one doubts whether it reached as far on the whole theatre. He may have been justified in his dislike of much that was dangerous in the swashing blows of Napoleon, but, when he condemns what he calls the Emperor's mania for dashing at Capitals, one suspects that he under-estimated the moral effect that is caused by seizing the centre of organization in a modern civilized state; and Moscow for several reasons cannot be cited in his favour. Also his interest in the game of war was perhaps too detached, as for example in the instance I have quoted, when he attacked the Spaniards without using his guns. The Emperor, whom he thought rash, would never consciously have thrown away a point. When he seems almost to complain of the way in which his enemy did not make full use of his advantages, one suspects him of this excessive detachment. Jomini at Eylau was to exclaim, to the scandalization of Sainte-Beuve, at one moment that he would like to be their opponent, Benningsen; at another moment that he would like to be the Archduke Charles, a possible antagonist.¹ Saint-Cyr would never have gone so far: ever he was a true patriot, but, at least under the Empire, he was reproached with thinking too little of his men when off the field. Strange as such a suggestion may seem, one suspects he was not soldier enough at heart. Trained as a civilian, he was twenty-eight years old when he entered the army, and even then gained little regimental experience, so that he had the faults of a type of staff officer that seldom identifies himself with the men he guides. Yet all this must be read with the belief, nay the assurance, that he loved France and dearly loved her army.

We have, I think, no such detailed personal description of Saint-Cyr as we possess of Desaix. We know that he was tall, and his portrait by Vernet makes him a square-built, strong-framed man. It is curious that, whilst he remarks on the inconvenience of Desaix's habit of not wearing uniform or any mark of his rank, he himself is represented under the Empire, when every one flamed in gold, as wearing neither epaulettes nor uniform, but only a plain blue riding-coat.² The contrast in manner between him and Desaix was very great: Saint-Cyr,

¹ Sainte-Beuve, *Le Général Jomini*, Paris, Lévy, 1869, pp. 76-7.

² *Marbot*, iii. 107, 108, 119.

was always cool, if not glacial, whatever the emergency might be, and careful to conceal his thoughts, whilst Desaix, anxious to divulge his ideas, poured them out without a break. Desaix lived cheerily amidst his staff, telling them all that had occurred, as when, on his return from his first interview with Bonaparte after landing from Egypt, just before Marengo, he insisted on awaking Savary and telling him all that the First Consul had said.¹ Saint-Cyr, on the other hand, lived alone, so that in 1812 his men nicknamed him 'the Owl'.² Consequently Desaix was the more likely to be loved and to form disciples, whilst the proud reserve of Saint-Cyr kept others at a distance.

It is, however, but fair to Saint-Cyr to point out that much of the description of his least pleasing characteristics comes from the time of the Empire, when, however destitute of personal ambition he might have been, he had been soured by seeing himself passed over by men far his inferior in talents and experience, who had burgeoned into Marshals and Dukes; and we shall find him jibbing when Oudinot, whom he had known only as the brave head of a regiment, came to command him in 1812. Sympathetic one can hardly fancy him ever to have been, but the charges made against him of being a bad comrade, of letting his neighbours in a battle be sacrificed, seem to me quite unfounded. Still, we hear of few friends, except Desaix. Dessolles, like him rather a *frondeur*, is mentioned as his particular friend, but we find Ney, not an easy man to please, thanking him for defending him before Moreau,³ and expressing his wish to serve again under him, a feeling shared by Baraguey d'Hilliers.⁴ And his unbroken friendship with Desaix survived all their controversies on military matters.

As for the style of warfare of the two rivals, although Desaix would seem to have liked the plain and Saint-Cyr the hills as their theatres, Desaix preferred light troops and all actions for which they are employed, affairs of advanced-guards and other similar fights, whilst Saint-Cyr preferred troops that could strike the decisive blows. Then Desaix did almost everything with his advanced-guard, whilst Saint-Cyr used his reserve.⁵

¹ Savary, i, Part I, 168-9.

² *Marbot*, iii. 109, 126-7; Thiébauld, ii. 197-8.

³ Gay de Vernon, *Saint-Cyr*, 457.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 168-70.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 192.

When Napoleon, discussing war with Saint-Cyr in 1812, placed Desaix above Kléber as a General, Saint-Cyr expressed his surprise, thinking that Kléber, who struck hard, would have been more to the mind of the Emperor than Desaix, who, good at a war of posts and advanced-guards, never threw in his whole strength to obtain a decision. Napoleon acknowledged that Desaix had had that fault, but said that he had thoroughly corrected him, and he had entirely changed his method, which certainly seems true.¹ Lesser men had their criticisms. In 1798, when the two Generals met at Rome, their A.D.C. agreed on a formula, that success would not be doubtful nor a reverse to be feared, if the plans of such a man as Saint-Cyr were carried out by such a man as Desaix.² Moreau had laid down that Desaix would gain battles; Saint-Cyr would prevent them being lost. The formula would have pained Saint-Cyr, who preached that the conception of the plan was nothing compared to the execution of it,³ and Moreau too, was not fair to Saint-Cyr, who had his full share of success, and certainly was ready enough to strike. On some points the pair resembled each other: both were honourable men of clean lives and clean hands, Saint-Cyr, who lived in the rich days of the Empire, being remarkable for his pure life.⁴ When Desaix fell at Marengo the Empire really lost two Marshals, for undoubtedly, had he lived, he would have carried up his friend with him.

To return to the Armée du Rhin. I pass over numerous wild attempts, dictated by the Representatives, to cross the Rhine, all of which ended in failure.⁵ Landremont, indeed, had trouble enough to hold his own on the left bank. He declared that out of a nominal strength of 50,000 he had only some 31,000 men,⁶ and that he could not hold the lines of the Lauter much longer. Brunswick was pressing back the *corps des Vosges* from Hornbach on Bitche, and the 'Moselle' soon had to withdraw to the left bank of the Sarre. At this moment fresh confusion was caused by a wholesale change of commanders. Schauenbourg had drilled the troops of the 'Moselle' into some order, but he

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Méms.*, iii. 48.

² Thiébault, ii. 198 note 1.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Méms.*, iii. 197.

⁴ Gay de Vernon, *Saint-Cyr*, 497-8, quoting Armand Carrel in the *Revue française*, No. 12, pp. 199-200.

⁵ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 126-42; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 73-4.

⁶ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 185.

was considered to be an aristocrat, and the *Conseil exécutif* on the 24th September nominated René Moreaux, who had been commanding the *corps des Vosges*, to succeed him. With the 'Rhin' Delmas was to succeed Landremont, who was a Noble and therefore 'suspect'; with the 'Nord' Jourdan from the 'Ardennes' was to succeed Houchard. The strange element in these changes, judged by Revolutionary precedent, was that only one of the commanders concerned, Houchard, went to the scaffold; Landremont was merely sent in arrest to Paris.¹

All this was more easily said than done, for the Generals saw that promotion led at best to disgrace, even if it did not imply execution. René Moreaux, who was at the moment incapacitated by the opening of an old wound, refused the command of the 'Moselle', thus eventually opening the way to Hoche: Delmas declined to avail himself of the preparations made for his escape from Landau, and with much good sense preferred to remain where he was, rather than to join his army.² Then on the 2nd October the Representatives chose Pichegru, who was in command on the upper Rhine, but, whether from modesty or from his knowledge of the hopelessness of the situation, he twice refused the promotion. Clarke was writing in despair to the Representatives to get a commander for the 'Rhin' without loss of time, but they could not get even a temporary commander. Munnier, the senior General of Division, had at first taken over the work, believing it was only for a few days, but, when he found that, notwithstanding all his requests, no successor was appointed, he went on strike, and literally refused to give any orders, thinking he would thus force the Representatives to release him. Saint-Cyr, who took to heart the danger to which the left was exposed in the mountains by the retreat of the *corps des Vosges* and of the 'Moselle', went to him to represent the situation and to ask for orders. Munnier was walking up and down his room: he stopped only for a moment to listen to the Adjutant-General, and then went on quarter-decking. Saint-Cyr pressed for an answer and, being told to repeat what he had said, he suggested what should be done. Munnier was quite decided: he would give no such orders, he would give no orders at all, and they could do what they liked. Saint-Cyr had to act for himself and to throw back the front of

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 188-9.

² Bonnal, *Desaix*, 36.

the left wing, whilst Clarke, probably on his own initiative, sent up some reinforcements.¹ Munnier was a man of his word and fairly beat the Representatives, who in revenge arrested him and sent him to Paris with another prisoner. On the way the other prisoner and the escort deserted, when Munnier returned to Strasbourg and asked for further orders. At last they succeeded in lodging him in prison at Paris, where, as with unconscious wisdom he kept quiet, he remained unnoticed until the fall of Robespierre set him free. Then a fresh difficulty occurred to the worthy General: was the order of release legal?² How Munnier was got rid of we are not told.

Driven to their wits' end the Representatives made the most absurd appointment. 'One day', says Savary, 'they made us mount at 8 a.m. to recognize as General a certain Lt.-Colonel of Dragoons, named Carlin. At eleven we again had to mount to recognize him as General of Division. Next day he was in orders as General Commanding-in-Chief,'³ and this is hardly an exaggeration. One of the Representatives had asked a Staff officer, Borel, coming from the 11th Dragoons, to point out some good officers fit to make Generals of. Borel replied that he only knew one, for whose patriotism he could answer, whilst for military talents his equal could not be found, this was Lt.-Colonel Carlenc, in command of the depot of the 11th Dragoons at Benfeld. The Representatives made him General of Brigade on the 20th September and called him up to Wissembourg. On the 1st October they promoted him General of Division. On the 2nd October at 8 a.m. Carlenc was at a council of war called to get a commander at ~~the~~ posts. Not knowing any one, he was standing apart, and leaning against the chimney-piece, listening to the refusals of his seniors to accept the command, when one of them turned round and said that he was the man for the place. Carlenc refused at first, saying the burden would crush him, but he gave way in presence of the Representatives and accepted.⁴

Carlenc, a splendid regimental officer,⁵ was hopeless as a

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 189 note 1, 190 note 1, 191-3; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 107-9.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, 136 note 1.

³ Savary, i. 4.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 108-10; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 193-4.

⁵ Général Jean-Paschal-Raymond Carlenc (1743-died after 1821). Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 194 note 3; Le Grand, 171.

commander, as his own good sense had at first told him. He shut himself up to concoct his plan, which for a time was kept as secret as that of Trochu in Paris in 1870 : all that was known was that, despising petty affairs, he meditated a vast plan to terminate the campaign at one blow. The front of the army was defended by a long line of works, but its extent made it difficult to guard. The Prussians were advancing against the left, and Wurmser with his Austrians was preparing to attack. At this important moment Carlenc issued his first orders, and Saint-Cyr, opening what he hoped would be the letter containing instructions, learnt that the whole army was to engage in a game of 'posts'. Carlenc had found with horror that the troops were not placed according to the numbers of their corps : this was to be altered : if the 1st infantry regiment were on the left in the mountains, and, say the 100th, up the river at Huningue, by Bâle, the two were to change places, so that all units of the army would be marching in every direction at the moment when an attack was to be delivered by the Austrians, reinforced by the Prussians. What particularly annoyed Saint-Cyr was that General Desaix, who knew the whole position of the left in the mountains, was to leave that post and go back to Hagenau.¹

In the midst of this trouble a further change was made. Just as the Representatives with the 'Nord' had disorganized the staff of that army when Houchard joined it, so those with the 'Rhin' on the 10th October 1793 suspended Clarke, who was doing his best to right the confusion. He was suspected of aristocratic leanings and of attachment to the family of Orleans. The defeat that soon came made his position worse, and he was arrested and sent to Paris, where he was imprisoned. Although he was eventually released, he could not get himself reinstated, and retired to Alsace or to Germany, where he remained for some time. As he claimed descent from Irish Kings, he must have had much difficulty in clearing himself of suspicion. Returning at last to Paris, he got himself reinstated on the 1st March 1795, when Carnot had him employed as *chef de bureau topographique* at the War Office. He was temporarily succeeded as Chief of the Staff to the 'Rhin' by Demont, and then on the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 114-18 ; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 36 ; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 195-6 ; Lavalette, i, Part I, 113.

22nd October 1793 by Bourcier, a General often employed by Napoleon for cavalry depots.¹

Saint-Cyr, like a wise staff officer, knowing that Ferey stood high in the opinion of the Representatives, made use of the General's name to carry out his own ideas, and he resisted the order to change the position of the troops by urging, what was all too true, that attack was imminent. He also would have retained Desaix, but that General was *noble* and knew that he was under constant surveillance. He therefore thought it safer to obey, so he set off for Hagenau, where he arrived at ten on the night of the 12th October. At 2 a.m. on the 13th he was ordered to return to the left: the long threatened storm had fallen on the army. On the 13th October 1793 Wurmser, with his Austrians and the *émigré* army of Condé, attacked the line of the Lauter, when, entangled in its own numerous works, the 'Rhin' fell back in confusion. The army was demoralized, and the Generals lost their heads: Dubois on the right retired needlessly; another General wanted a commissariat officer to tell him what to do and, finding him unwilling to advise, called on him in the name of the law to do so, until the unfortunate officer went off at a gallop. Yet another General, finding that an Austrian column had crossed the Rhine in his rear, instead of informing the Commander-in-Chief, wrote to the Jacobin Club of Strasbourg to ask whether he ought to retreat.² The disaster might have been repaired, for the Austrians did not press their first success, but Carlenc, when he got his army clear of the works, refused to throw himself on the enemy unless the Representatives gave him the formal order. Surprised and indignant at its defeat, the army after much fighting, in which occurred names to be well known in 1870, such as Woerth and Reichshofen, found itself under the walls of Strasbourg.³ It had been 34,400 strong, and had been driven easily from its lines by 43,185 Austrians and *émigrés*.

While the mass of the 'Rhin' was being dislodged from its position in the plain and driven up the river, on the left the

¹ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 200-1 and note; *Biog. des Cont.*, i. 988; *Fastes*, ii. 269.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 122 note.

³ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 201-7; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 96-104; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 117-34; Le Grand, 173-9; Lavalette, i, Part I, 113-14; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 35-42; Bittard des Portes, 112-20; *Vict. et Conq.*, ii. 65-8.

division des montagnes (in which Desaix, Saint-Cyr, and Soult served) had been untouched, except for demonstrations by the Prussians, who had undertaken to force back the French at the point where the two armies met. The division was commanded by Ferey: Desaix, who had got back from his excursion to Haguenau, directed the right, and Saint-Cyr the important point, the left. At midnight on the 13th October came orders to retreat, and the division fell back, first to Wœrth and then to Hochfelden on the Zorn river. This retreat was made in good order, except that a momentary panic was caused by some of the troops' firing at a hare. On the 20th October Desaix got his reward: he was promoted General of Division and, much to his pleasure, appointed to the command of the right division, the *avant-garde*, replacing Dubois.¹ He soon handled his new command, for the Austrians attacked him on the 27th October, but found that the division, which had done so badly under its former commanders, now fought well.² Ferino, an old but good officer, now took over command of the *division des montagnes*, and Ferey reverted to a brigade in it.³ The retreat of the army was fatal to Carlenç's retention of the command, and on the 23rd October the Minister for War ordered him to be arrested and brought to Paris. Fortunately for him, his old Dragoon regiment supported him and obtained his release. Indeed, he was on the 26th November re-employed, and commanded at Dunkirk. On the 9th March 1794 he was suspended and then retired. In 1822 he was begging for an increase of pension from Victor, then Minister for War to Louis XVIII.⁴

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 35-42, 372-3; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 118-35; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 103-4; Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 215-17; Soult, i. 71.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 139.

³ Général Comte Pierre-Marie-Barthélemy Ferino (1747-1816), *Fastes*, iii. 213-15; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 111 note 3. Before 1792 he had been twenty-two years in the Austrian service.

⁴ Chuquet, *Wissembourg*, 195 note.

IV

LANDAU

(October 1793 to January 1794)

Effect of the Terror on the Armée du Rhin. Hoche and Pichegru. Failure at Kaiserslautern. Quarrels of the commanders. Relief of Landau.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1793 9th October. Lyons re-occupied by the Republicans.
15th-16th October. Battle of Wattignies.
11th-13th December. Defeat of the Vendéans at Le Mans.
19th December. Toulon re-occupied by the Republicans.
20th December. French driven back by Spanish on Perpignan.
23rd December. Defeat of Vendéans at Savenay.

THE Armée du Rhin had now fallen on its worst time, for the failure, not so much of itself as of its commanders, inevitably weakened discipline and exposed it to the tyranny of the Representatives. Unfortunately Alsace was now under the full system of the Terror, and those who believe that it was chiefly the Nobles that suffered from that system should read the record of the work done here by the Terrorists.¹ Strasbourg had been one of the towns to receive with delight the first movements of the Revolution, but its follies had soon turned the minds of many of its first admirers, and we have seen how both Rouget de L'Isle and Victor d'Anglois had suffered from their refusal to take the oath of obedience to the Convention.

It was difficult for any one to be safe or to escape punishment for reasons sometimes slight, sometimes ridiculous. It was a happy thought that long phrases were unsuited to a Republican, but the Terrorists were probably beaten when they laid down that the women of Alsace were to be dressed *à la française*. It was a crime for a priest to say mass, for a Jew to be circumcised or to wear a beard, for a butcher not to have meat, especially pork, and for a petty tradesman to sell some trifle above the fixed tariff. Where death was not awarded, exposure on the scaffold of the guillotine, or a long perambulation through the army or town was ordered. One Representative, besieged in

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 297-401.

Landau, revived an ancient punishment by shutting up a too critical patriot in an iron cage without food or drink.¹ An *émigré* being sick in hospital with scurvy, it was proposed to cure him with the guillotine. After all this it seems natural enough to find a Representative concluding that it was necessary to put to death every one not entirely devoted to the Republic.² Nor were inanimate things safe : one of the Jacobin administrators, offended by the way in which the tower of the Cathedral dominated its surroundings, proposed to cut it down to the base. In all this, besides the extraordinary thirst for blood that marked the Terrorists, one seems to trace the feelings of men themselves mad with fright and seeking safety by surpassing their fellows in ferocity.

On the 23rd October 1793 two fresh Representatives arrived at Saverne as *commissionnaires extraordinaires* with the army :³ the formidable Saint-Just,⁴ who, handsome as an angel, cold as ice, issued his sentences of death with the most perfect tranquillity, and his worthy colleague Le Bas.⁵ One of the first things they did was to declare that what the army wanted was a truly Republican Chief who believed in victory, and they sent off a courier to Pichegru.⁶ Then they set to work on the army to restore discipline, publishing threats which they carried out only too thoroughly. They had already the services of one of the vile *armées révolutionnaires*, 1,000 men nominally taken from the two armies 'Moselle' and 'Rhin', but really composed of deserters, vagabonds, and all the worst blackguards of the district, who went from village to village, dragging with them a guillotine with so-called 'Judges' : their excesses were so great that Saint-Just himself at last turned on their chief, Schneider, and ordered him to be pilloried on the scaffold of the guillotine, an order as illegal as the acts of which Saint-Just complained.⁷

The Nobles were hunted from the army ; the staff was 'purged'. Generals and officers were shot or degraded, three of

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 200 note 1.

² *Ibid.*, 331-2, 336.

³ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 176.

⁴ Antoine Saint-Just (1768-1794), guillotined with Robespierre, *Michaud*, xxxix. 604-8.

⁵ Pierre Le Bas (—1794). Shot himself when arrested with Robespierre. *Michaud*, xxiii. 478 ; Stéfane-Pol, 292 ; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 40 note 1.

⁶ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 177.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 319-21, 352-63 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 137-8.

them 'pour avoir prévariqué'. A stop was put to the habit which officers and men had of coming to Strasbourg for amusement, strict discipline was enforced, and boots and clothes were seized for the use of the troops.¹ All this sounds well enough, and one is amused at the catastrophe of an unfortunate officer, who had left his camp to visit the theatre in Strasbourg and who had the bad luck to inquire his way of no less a person than the formidable Saint-Just. The poor man saw little of gaiety for some time.² But an officer naturally asks why it should have required two civilians to do all this. The answer surely is that the Representatives and the Minister for War had so degraded the office of Commander-in-Chief that he had lost all power and initiative. Later we shall find the commander and the Generals of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' threatening to resign if not given proper power to preserve discipline, but such a step at this moment would have taken them all to the scaffold. And how much of the restoration of discipline was effectual? The staff had to be *épuré* four times and was still much 'suspect'. Boots, stockings, shirts, sheets, were demanded from the wicked aristocrats, and only part of the supply was used, the rest being left to rot in the stores. Cloaks were demanded from the people, and a year later were still in store.³

'Many officers', says General Le Grand, 'have told me that, cursing in their hearts the *régime* of the Jacobins, they tried to get themselves killed on the field of battle, and found there both glory and their first promotions. Is it then the case that terror employed *à propos*, and fanaticism directed with address, can give the same results as heroism? This reflection is only too true, although it is not to the advantage of the human race.'⁴ M. Chuquet quotes this as if it justified any part of the Terror,⁵ forgetting that the General goes on to say: 'À tout prendre, la Terreur n'a rien sauvé du tout.' It was not, he says, fear or the shudder produced by the thought of the guillotine, but the noble ideas of pure citizens, hate for the foreigner, the conviction of the superiority of their race over all others, and the firmness of true soldiers, that brought victory. It is a misfortune for a

¹ Le Grand, 180-7; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 176, 180, 322-9; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 25-47.

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 28.

³ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 397-8, but see Chuquet, *Hoche*, 37 note 1.

⁴ Le Grand, 186-7.

⁵ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 47.

nation when its officers believe they can save honour only by losing their lives, and such desperation is as likely to lead to disaster as to victory.

Both armies now had the good fortune to receive commanders who possessed the confidence of the Representatives with them, the 'Moselle' getting Hoche, and the 'Rhin' Pichegru, two men who were to play such prominent parts in the future. Both were to gain credit, Hoche by the relief of Landau and by the pacification of La Vendée, and Pichegru by what was called his conquest of Holland. With their appointment to these armies began a rivalry and struggle between them which in this theatre were terminated by the disgrace of Hoche and the elevation of Pichegru to the command of the main army of the Republic, the 'Nord'. They were to come into conflict again in 1797, Hoche then possessing much prestige from the pacification of La Vendée and his successes on the Rhine at the head of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', Pichegru discredited by the discovery of his negotiations with the enemy. Hoche was to die seeing his party victorious, while Pichegru went into an exile from which he returned as a secret conspirator, only to perish in the prisons of Napoleon. Both men are worthy of a longer personal history than I can attempt here, Hoche because he was, and is, taken as the model Republican General, who would have been able, had he lived, to have opposed the seizure of power by Napoleon : Pichegru because he is often believed to have been so formidable that Napoleon did not venture to try him and had him 'suicided' in prison. Both beliefs I consider as utter mistakes, but none the less I must attempt some description of the two men.

Hoche received his appointment in the following way. René Moreaux had, as I have said, refused the command of the 'Moselle'.¹ The old and deaf Delauney had to take command on the 30th September, although he pleaded that, still capable of leading his own division of 6,000 men, he had neither the health nor the talents to conduct 25,000. When the Minister dismissed his Chief of the Staff, Hédouville,² Delauney, who was expecting an attack by the Prussians, stood at bay and swore

¹ René Moreaux, 286-8.

² Général Gabriel-Marie-Théodore-Joseph, Comte de Hédouville, who afterwards succeeded Hoche in La Vendée : not to be confused with Général Vicomte Joseph de Hédouville, who at this time was arrested while serving with the 'Nord', *Dict. hist. et biog.*, ii. 158-9.

to retain that officer at his post. On the 29th October he himself was suspended by the Minister, when the Representatives wanted young d'Aoust,¹ but Hoche was nominated at Paris. Distinguishing himself in the 'Nord' at the defence of Dunkirk against the Duke of York, he had become known in the capital from his letters: indeed his General, Le Veneur, had sent him to Paris to denounce Dumouriez, and there he had become acquainted with Marat. That friend had been assassinated in July, but the formidable Robespierre received Hoche's letters and spoke of him as a patriot, whilst the Representative Audouin supported him warmly. On the 22nd September Hoche had been appointed Chief of the Staff to the Armée des Ardennes then under Jourdan, but on the 22nd October, already General of Brigade, he was sent as General of Division to command the 'Moselle', and on the 31st October 1793 he took over that force from Delaunay.²

Hoche was not given the title of Commander-in-Chief, for at the moment it was expected that the two armies 'Moselle' and 'Rhin' would act together, when it was assumed that Pichegru, as the senior General, would take supreme command of both forces.³ Still, Hoche had done well in having reached the head of an army only seventeen months after the date of his first commission. As was to be expected with one of the Gardes Françaises, he was a fine man, although built more on the lines of Hercules than of Apollo,⁴ but, strong as he might seem, he had his weak spot. So early as the 30th September 1792 he had suffered for a moment from hæmorrhage from his lungs,⁵ and perhaps such a constitution explains the nervous excitability which he always displayed and the hysterical note which comes so unpleasantly into almost all his utterances. Like many nervous men he had his 'tics'. When seated and talking, he held his sword between his legs and kept on half-drawing and then returning the blade, so that the click of steel kept time with his utterances, sounding well to him, but rather putting out any interlocutor. When standing, he left his sword alone but, unable to keep quiet, his hand was always busy, passing and repassing behind his ear one of the long locks of hair much worn at this period.⁶

¹ Then serving in the Armée des Pyrénées-Orientales.

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 48-51; Wallon, *Rep.* iv. 182 note 1.

³ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 171-2.

⁴ Barras, ii. 52-3.

⁵ Cuneo d'Ornano, i. 79.

⁶ Le Grand, 205.

We have a sketch of him in 1794 by a General of the 'Rhin'. 'He was quite a young man, 26 years old,¹ brown eyes, quick glance, thin and upright, head held proudly, face scarred by a sabre-cut in front, rather sombre, but with a slight smile on his lips. Resolute, wild with youth, doubting of nothing, one would have believed him careless, but, on the contrary, he seized every opportunity of instructing himself'; and the narrator goes on to describe him as examining every one in a very Napoleonic fashion, turning his back instantly on any unfortunate man who hesitated in his answers. But this, as I have said, was in 1794, when he had already learnt much. In 1793 he was only twenty-five and, just as Pichegru was cautious and reserved, so Hoche was rash, violent, presumptuous, and dogmatic. If he found the Prussians retiring, he believed he would hunt them over the Rhine. When beaten off from Kaiserslautern by Brunswick, he solemnly pronounced the position very bad and as giving him a very poor opinion of his successful adversary. When the wheels of his artillery of position drove heavily, as may happen to that valuable arm at times, he declared that he would have no more guns with his army, nothing but infantry and cavalry; then, swinging round on the interposition of a friend, a horse artilleryman, he agreed to retain the light pieces. Unfortunately for him, the calm, critical Saint-Cyr heard these outbursts: heard and never forgot.² At this period Hoche was coarse and obscene, not, says Le Grand, in speech,³ but certainly in his letters, to a degree that disgusted men who were not very mealy-mouthed. Poor General Simon, asking for instructions, received the amazing reply, 'Marche donc, petit bougre, ne sais-tu pas que tu as des canons à prendre? Nous avons cinq bataillons à Nothweiler. Corresponds avec celui qui les commande.'⁴

Pichegru was the very opposite to Hoche. Strong like him, as his struggle with his captors in 1804 was to show, he had the firm, heavy frame of the peasants of his country, with their cunning, masked at will by a calm phlegm. His face was dull and gloomy, and his eye, which could be full of fire and intelligence, became veiled and uncertain when he wished to conceal

¹ Le Grand, 204-5.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 208-9.

³ Le Grand, 205.

⁴ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 38; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 199 note 1.

his thoughts.¹ He had been capitally educated, for the Minimes, a teaching order, had sent him to their college of Brienne, where he became the junior usher, 'surveillant et répétiteur'.² As he entered the College in 1779 when eighteen, and Bonaparte was admitted in the same year when between nine and ten, the two must have seen one another, but there is nothing to show that he ever taught the future Emperor. Either unwilling to continue such a life, or dismissed for some irregularity, on the 30th June 1780 he enlisted as a gunner in the 2nd regiment of artillery, that of Metz, and is said, like Jourdan, to have served in America with the French troops sent to the assistance of the revolted English Colonies. He rose from Sergeant, 5th July 1789, to Captain, 24th March 1793.³ He threw himself into the Revolutionary party and at Besançon his sonorous voice told in the Jacobin Club of the town, so that he became its President. The 3rd battalion of the volunteers of the department of the Gard, passing through Besançon, elected him as their commander on the 9th October 1792, and his care for his men soon made them style him their father.⁴

A friend introduced him to Bouchotte, the War Minister, who, recognizing a kindred spirit, jumped him through the grades to General of Division, and in August 1793 sent him to the 'Rhin'. Twice he declined the succession to the command of that army, but was nominated a third time. It was too dangerous to refuse any longer, and on the 29th October he arrived at Strasbourg and informed the *Comité* of his entire devotion to the Republic.⁵

Two such men as Hoche and Pichegru were sure to disagree, and their training, even where it seemed to coincide, separated them the more certainly. Both, favoured by the Revolution, had risen from the ranks of the regular army, in which both had served in special corps, but Hoche, born near Paris and trained, it is said, by Lefebvre, in the Gardes Françaises, had much of the

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 96-7; Le Grand, 205-6; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 203-4.

² Jung, *Bonaparte*, i. 83.

³ Susane, *Art. franç.*, 294.

⁴ General Charles Pichegru (1761-1804), Michaud, xxxiv. 274-80; *Biog. des Cont.*, iv. 934-7; Guillaumin, 1-85; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 93-7; Susane, *Inf. franç.*, i. 329, gives the formation of the 3rd Gard as the 2nd September 1792. Déprez, 429, makes it the 9th Oct. 1792. I presume Susane is right.

⁵ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 175 note 1; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 95-6; Guillaumin, 4-6.

feverish nature of the Parisians, whilst Pichegru, born in the Eastern Provinces, had served in the artillery largely recruited from that region, and which in all armies has something solid, not to say stolid, about it. In politics one would not have thought them to differ, for the Gardes Françaises had soon manifested their sympathy with the Revolution, whilst the artillery had been the military body most united in support of the new doctrines and had led the opposition to Dumouriez. Yet, whilst Pichegru was a Jacobin pure, Hoche, so at least his rival asserted, had belonged to the more moderate society, the Cordeliers, Danton's Club. Even in the smallest personal matters the contrast between the two was marked, as to their friendships for instance; Pichegru, except for his connexion with Moreau, would seem to have stood and acted much alone, whilst Hoche was ever ready to shriek his affection or admiration for any person who took his fancy. Pichegru was always guarded and reserved, so much so that even now it is difficult to know how far he really was a traitor in his later communications with the enemy or was merely playing with them in view of the dubious future. Hoche on the other hand was always ready to pour out his sentiments, likes and dislikes. He had done his best to educate himself, but Pichegru, almost alone amongst the Generals that had risen as he had done, knew how to write well; not only was his actual manuscript good, but his style was clear and his dispatches required neither erasures nor corrections.¹

As for personal habits, whilst Hoche was a libertine whose excesses hastened, if they did not cause his premature death² (and many Generals were licentious enough), Pichegru professed the greatest austerity of manners, a virtue that sneerers attributed to the necessity imposed by his ill-favoured face. As for political morality, Hoche was incapable of the treachery of which Pichegru was to be guilty in 1795, yet in their last struggle at Fructidor in 1797, whilst Hoche was resorting to the most illegal violence for the supremacy of his political party, Pichegru, perhaps restrained by his habitual prudence, was acting on strict constitutional lines, and indeed was defeated and crushed because he did not resort to arms in self-defence. In their attitude towards others the two also differed. Hoche was apt enough

¹ Barras, iii. 91.

² Le Grand, 206.

at denunciations, and, even when he had found the worth of such a man as Hédouville,¹ he sacrificed him to the Representatives. Pichegru, professing that the guillotine would make things move, had the good sense and the courage (and it wanted much in dealing with such a man as Saint-Just) to save officers unjustly suspected. A word from him saved Savary, when he was 'suspect',² and Desaix, also much 'suspect', was protected: time after time came the order to dismiss him, but he was maintained by Pichegru. What is more, Desaix knew nothing of this till the end of the campaign.³

Then, as to their respective aptitude as commanders at this moment, Saint-Cyr remarks how little experience of war either had had, much less than that of the Generals they came to command. Certainly, as an officer Pichegru had only seen the enemy on the opposite bank of the Rhine, probably through a telescope, and in the relief of Landau it was Hoche who was to get most of the credit. Yet Saint-Cyr, who served under both, declares that Hoche was far inferior to his rival in judgement and information,⁴ and this too though he never thought much of the ability of Pichegru. This opinion should be the more weighty as Saint-Cyr points out that, while Hoche had always treated him well and had got him promoted Colonel, Pichegru, under whom he had served longer, never did anything for him.⁵ Also Hoche, having, it is true, a wider field open to him, began by a blunder, the march on Kaiserslautern, which might well have been fatal to him, whilst Pichegru, restrained to a narrower field along the Rhine, committed no great error. Yet Saint-Cyr may have been insensibly influenced by the characters of the rivals. Hoche he had found violent, abusive, changeable.⁶ Pichegru, on the other hand, doubting himself and prudently keeping behind a veil of reserve, had skill enough to choose good counsellors and to follow their advice. Schérer, in command of the 'Haut-Rhin' under him, now prompted him well. Legrand and Desaix he soon listened to, and Bourcier was a good Chief of the Staff.⁷ Now Saint-Cyr considered that the 'Rhin' never did so well as under commanders who took advice, his own of course to be preferred.⁸

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 65 and note 1.

² Savary, i, Part I, 6.

³ Lavalette, i, Part I, 121. ⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, 201, 266. ⁵ *Ibid.*, 203 note 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 208-9.

⁷ Le Grand, 207-8.

⁸ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 48.

Hoche is the Republican hero to many writers, a distinction one suspects to be much due to his early death, which prevented his ambition from being shown, as that of Bonaparte was to be. His association, whatever form it took, with Marat, Bouchotte, and Robespierre, makes one feel inclined to shrink from him, and his denunciation of Valence, when such things were apt to spell death to the culprit, was a greater sin than those of Augereau and of Suchet. Denunciations indeed always came easily to him. Still, one thing must be allowed him : he grew in character and grew steadily. The advice of Le Veneur, to whom he had been A.D.C. with the 'Nord', had done something for his manners, which were further improved by his contact in 1794 with that good society which was to be best met at that period in the prison in which he found himself. Unlike Bonaparte, his first stroke was, as I have said, a blunder, but he learnt the lesson Brunswick taught him at Kaiserslautern, and then did relieve Landau by operations which should have been undertaken at first. La Vendée was not a good school for a commander, but even there he learnt much, and the violent patriot of 1792 ended by seeing the necessity for some toleration, even in matters of religion, a result reached by Bonaparte from the first. Like Bonaparte, he was ready to use the troops against the *Corps législatif* in support of his own party, but he quailed at the first angry words of the Directors opposed to him, as Bonaparte was to be daunted for a moment before the *Cinq-Cents*. One doubts his political virtue, and suspects that, given the opportunity, he too might have aimed at the power he was so little fit to wield. Under all the varnish given by time the real Hoche makes himself felt, and, dying in 1797, he found time to denounce Bonaparte, as he had denounced Valence in 1792.

Notwithstanding all his faults, the choice of Hoche was a most fortunate one. Schauenbourg, as I have said, had got the army into good shape, and the troops of the 'Moselle', as well as those of the 'Rhin', with a curious but praiseworthy confidence in themselves, considered they had been baffled rather than beaten. Hoche came with the confidence and dash that would have carried Beauharnais and Houchard to the gates of Landau, and the army, longing to go forward, followed with joy where he led. It was much the same with Pichegru : had he come, says Saint-Cyr, after Custine, Beauharnais, or Landre-

mont, the army would have been troubled at the arrival of a General with so little experience: succeeding Carlenc, his appointment was regarded as an augury of success.¹ Assembling his Generals, he learnt the opinion of the army and soon began his attacks. All through the subsequent operations, which ended in the relief of Landau, he kept his hold on the enemy, and, though the success is credited to Hoche, it must always be remembered how much depended on the support given by the 'Rhin'. Hoche averred that Pichegru was little with his own fighting line, a criticism which may also be made of his campaign in Holland, but in this struggle by the Rhine no mistake is complained of by Saint-Cyr, a sharp enough observer.

Before commencing the history of the next operations I must notice an action that took place at Saverne, where Ferino's division linked the left of the 'Rhin' with the right of the 'Moselle'. On the 22nd October Saverne was attacked by the Austrians under Hotze, and Ferino was saved from being driven back only by the arrival of six battalions from the 'Moselle', by whose aid he repulsed the enemy. I presume that one of these battalions was the 3rd Meuse, led by Lt.-Colonel Oudinot, and that it was for his conduct here that Oudinot was on the 5th November promoted Colonel of the second battalion of the famous Régiment de Picardie, which also had been among the six sent up by the 'Moselle'. The officers of the regular regiments were naturally annoyed at seeing a former private jump over their heads from a volunteer battalion, but Oudinot proposed that the choice of the worthiest for command should be postponed to the morrow, and his conduct that day at their head made them acknowledge his fitness.²

The first duty of the two commanders was to relieve Landau, but, instead of adopting a combination by which the 'Moselle' would have joined the left of the 'Rhin', they agreed to separate. Hoche may have been unwilling to act with his senior, Pichegru, for, as we shall see, he was not really a Commander-in-Chief; instead of marching to his right, he determined to move northwards on Kaiserslautern, and so to come on the rear of the enemy. On the 17th November 1793 he started from the line of the Sarre with some 36,000 men, styled by him 'l'élite de la

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 140.

² Pils, Appendix, xxx; Nollé, 6-7, 8-9; Susane, *Inf. franç.*, i. 226, 335, 360, 364.

sans-culotterie'. He was full of confidence and as coarse in language as usual. 'Écoute, bougre de sans-culotte' was the beginning of a dispatch to Ambert, who led a division.¹ Hoche had received 15,000 men from the 'Rhin' and 5,000 from the 'Ardennes',² so that he had 40,000 men, but part of the army was left to watch the passes in the Vosges by Annweiler, and I presume that Colonel Oudinot remained with this detachment, or with the troops at Saverne. Lt.-Colonel and Adjutant-General Lefebvre was on the staff of a division, or on that of the army. As the army advanced it found the enemy retreating, for Brunswick, with whom it had to deal, was drawing back into winter quarters; still there was some severe fighting before Hoche entered Blieskastel on the 18th November. Next day the formidable camp of Hornbach was taken, and Brunswick, fearing that Hoche might mean to move on Landau by Pirmasens, determined to stand at Kaiserslautern. To Hoche, the Prussian retreat appeared to be due to sheer terror, and he entered Zweibrücken well pleased.

Here on the 22nd November 1793 Soult, who had hitherto belonged to the 'Rhin' as Captain, joined the 'Moselle' for the first time. His battalion had been sent to join the right of the 'Moselle', and on arrival he had found an order of the day, of the 14th November from Hoche, issued on account of the insufficiency of staff officers, inviting officers that felt themselves fit to fulfil the duties to send in their names. In fact officers were much averse to filling posts that might so easily bring them to the scaffold. When nobles were got rid of, the *sans-culottes* often did not like to replace them, and Hoche found that two Generals of Brigade would not accept the rank of General of Division. Soult, always ambitious, was not restrained by such fears, and at once wrote to Hoche to offer himself. On the 19th November 1793 he was appointed *Adjoint provisoire* on the staff of the army, and detailed for staff duty with Taponier's division.³ He was in good hands, for Taponier became one of the leading Generals of the 'Moselle', and soon won the confidence of Hoche. Pouget, who was Taponier's Chief of the Staff later, calls him 'le plus digne homme du monde'.⁴

¹ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 27.

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 66.

³ Cunéo d'Ornano, i. 79-80.

⁴ General Alexandre-Camille Taponier (1749-1831). He had risen from the

Hoche himself was hysterical with delight at what seemed such certain success. 'Shall the wretched *sans-culottes*', he wrote to the Minister, 'always have fruitless work? No, they shall have liberty, velvet breeches, satin vests, coats with large sleeves. All the tailors and shoe-makers are in requisition.'¹ Meantime he sent back from his conquests mirrors, clocks, bells, and other 'pretintailles', besides levying large subsidies.²

When he drew near Kaiserslautern Hoche was still in the same mood. His army, whose countenance, as he told the Minister, was imposing and terrible, was in presence of 'hordes of slaves, the supports of tyrants'. 'This position seems formidable, but our bayonets . . .'³ Still, in his force were some 'insoucians' whom he distrusted, but who marched when he spoke to them of the guillotine.⁴ On the 28th November he began his attack on Brunswick and the Prussians in Kaiserslautern: he failed, but was not depressed; the ball would begin again next day, and it did, but with the same result; his divisions went astray, the artillery of position did not get up in time, and the 'hordes of slaves' stood firm. Yet again on the 30th November he tried for the third time, but his men had fired wildly, want of ammunition, as so often, was the excuse for defeat, and Hoche had to sound what he chose to call 'la marche rétrograde'.⁵ Brunswick did not pursue, and by the 3rd December the army was back at Zweibrücken. It had lost two guns, a colour, and 2,000 men, including 700 left as prisoners. Brunswick had only lost 44 officers and 785 men killed and wounded.⁶

One or two remarks may be made. On the second day Huet's division, which had reached the Moorlautern plateau, had its left flank charged by the cavalry of the enemy, and was only saved by a counter-charge of French horse, brought up from

ranks of the Gardes Françaises. Chuquet, *Hoche*, 79 note 1; Chassin, *Pacifications*, iii. 410 note 2; Pouget, 28.

¹ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 30.

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 76-7.

³ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 32-3.

⁴ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 79.

⁵ Rousselin, i. 130.

⁶ For the expedition to Kaiserslautern see Chuquet, *Hoche*, 61-92, giving the German authorities; Soult, i. 78-83; General Ambert's account in Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 324-35, said to be incorrect by Chuquet, *Hoche*, 81 note 1; Jomini, *Rev.*, iv. 153-64; Rousselin, i. 125-31; Cunéo d'Ornano, i. 96-109. For plans see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas, Plate I; Vogel xxii.

Osterberg and led by Hédouville. Now Hédouville had been Chief of the Staff when Hoche arrived. As we have seen, Delaunay had refused to suspend him even when ordered by the formidable *Comité*, and Hoche, finding himself with an army all unknown to him, naturally had tried to retain him. The *Comité* was firm, and Hoche had to profess his own distrust of all Nobles, for to belong to that caste was a crime in the staff officer ; still, he retained him until this expedition was finished, and then in tears embraced and dismissed him to arrest. This is a good example of the stupid manner in which difficulties were put in the way of commanders. Then Hoche offered the post to Grigny, a young lad, an assistant to the staff, in which were twenty-four Adjutant-Generals senior to him, and in one of his sentimental paroxysms threw himself on the neck of his new assistant. The grave Saint-Cyr, meeting Hoche's staff at this time, found that he himself, with his 29 years, was the oldest of the lot : Grigny, really 27, looked 18, and Mermet, an Adjutant-General high in favour with Hoche, seemed a boy of 16 just fresh from college ; the rest were all abroad.¹

To do Carnot and the *Comité* justice, they received the news of this check sensibly enough, although they might well have complained, for they had proposed the operation attempted next, that of joining the 'Moselle' to the left of the 'Rhin' and then falling on the rear of the Austrians opposing Pichegru. At this moment, however, Hoche was high in favour with every one of importance. Carnot considered the General as his *protégé* ; Robespierre said that all his actions proved him a *sans-culotte* ; the formidable Saint-Just, who was soon to turn against him, now wrote that he had only bound himself by a fresh engagement, and that in place of one victory, he must win two. Instead of sending him to the scaffold, the *Comité* reinforced him by 10,000 men from the 'Ardennes' and wrote, 'A reverse is not a crime, when everything has been done to merit victory : it is not by events that we judge men, but by their efforts and by their courage'.² Noble words, placed to the credit of Carnot ; noble if true, but for what crime except defeat had the gallant

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 183-5, 194 ; Rousselin, i. 131-3 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 207-8 ; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 84.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 189-90 ; Carnot, *Méms.*, i. 453-5 ; Rousselin, i. 133-6 and ii. 35 ; Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 34 ; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 130-2.

Houchard, his body all scarred with wounds, died on the scaffold?

Hoche himself felt, or affected, the most perfect security, which perhaps helped to shield him from those bullies, the Representatives. When, furious at his retreat, they began their usual threats, he replied with a smile by asking why they did not make a little order to fix victory: it had held to so little. 'But do not disturb yourselves,' he added, 'I have other means'¹ (as indeed ought to have been evident before), and he began his preparations for joining the left of the 'Rhin', and so coming on the right of Wurmser. Here, perhaps, his wild excursion on Kaiserslautern may have done him good, for much depended on keeping off Brunswick's Prussians until Wurmser's right flank had been turned. Brunswick was a skilful captain, but he seems to have been disconcerted by the very purposelessness of Hoche's blow, just as a perfect fencer may be puzzled by the clumsy whirls of a cudgel, and his co-operation with Wurmser was not as close and as immediate as it should have been. Hoche began by sending two divisions into the Vosges, Jacob from Bitche, and Taponier, with whom Soult served as staff-officer, to be followed by more as the reinforcements from the 'Ardenne's' arrived.

One of the future Marshalate received a high reward for Kaiserslautern. Lt.-Colonel Lefebvre had done his work well as Adjutant-General: on the 2nd December 1793 he was promoted General of Brigade and was used amongst the first divisions launched into the Rhine valley. Hoche had been complaining of the want of Generals, of whom so many had been arrested, dismissed, or suspended.² Now on the 14th December he wrote, 'Moreaux and Dubois have just arrived; Huet and Lefebvre, recently promoted, have begun work: these four Generals will much relieve me'.³ Old memories may have had something to do with this promotion of Lefebvre: he, like Hoche himself and Taponier, had been in the Gardes Françaises, where it is said he had taught the young Hoche his drill, and now his dogged courage, his straightforwardness, and his rough address, would suit one side of Hoche well enough.⁴

¹ Rousselin, i. 130-1; Vogel, xxii.

² Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 34; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 132-3.

³ Moreaux, 75.

⁴ Dubois came from the 'Rhin'; René-Moreaux had been commanding the

Lefebvre first, however, had run some danger from the fanatics at Paris. On the 5th September 1793 the *Comité* had decreed that all those who had served in the *Maison du Roi* or in the Guard decreed by the Legislative Assembly should withdraw from the armies to twenty leagues from the frontiers. This decree, which affected Bessières, Grouchy, Lefebvre, and Murat, besides Hoche himself, spread such ruin in the armies, and especially in the staffs, that the Representatives with the armies took on themselves to annul it. The former members of the Gardes Françaises, part of the *Maison*,¹ had been distributed amongst the armies in many important posts, and their services were considered so valuable that on the 6th October 1793 another decree exempted from the September one those that served in the Gardes Françaises, the Grenadiers-à-cheval and the Gendarmes de Lunéville.² It would have been a quaint incident if Lefebvre had been sent from the army as a Noble. Even in January 1794, when Hoche might have had enough on hand with his two armies, he was complaining hysterically that his staff must be purged, as there were 'gardes du Capet, pages', &c. amongst the Adjutant-Generals and their assistants. Disseminated as Hoche's troops then were, still he believed their patriotism could not be assured, as he had not been able to obtain the statements of their services in twelve days!³ Jomini's great grievance in life was that Berthier had put him in arrest for a delay in sending in returns after Bautzen, but Hoche knew well that at this period an accusation of want of patriotism meant death.

I now turn to the 'Rhin', where Pichegru might be thought to have had a difficult task, supervised as he was by two arbitrary and headstrong Representatives. Saint-Just and Le Bas were not only undertaking the discipline and the supply of the army, but also its operations, on which they were corresponding with Carnot. Pichegru did not attempt to question their supremacy: he knew himself to be helpless on that head, but, with some skill, he professed to throw himself into the course

Corps des Vosges; and Édouard Huet (not Pierre Huet, who had led a division on Kaiserslautern and had shown himself incapable) had just defended Bitche.

¹ Susane, *Inf. franç.*, ii. 106-10; *Cav. franç.*, i. 208.

² Susane, *Cav. franç.*, i. 235-7, 243, 244.

³ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 42. I cannot find authority for the decrees.

they acted on, and to believe with them that all would go well with the guillotine in action. They took him into high favour, and indeed he had much to gain by their action where he could direct it, for they could strike where he did not dare to do so. It was very dangerous for a commander to remove an incapable officer who might be a hot patriot, or who might have the ear of the Minister, as we have already seen in the case of Custine and Ferrier, where Ferrier, accused of incapacity, had at once denounced his commander at Paris. Landremont, knowing this, had not dared at first to remove the incapable Ferey, who might have been protected by the Representatives. It is no excuse for the Terror, it is indeed a further charge against it, that the Representatives could do necessary work for which the commander was powerless, but Pichegru was wise in letting the storm go by or in trying to guide it for his own ends. For military matters, as I have said, he had good advisers, and here he did not fear to strike : here indeed lay safety, if no disaster followed.

So, whilst Hoche had been wasting the strength of the 'Moselle' on Kaiserslautern, Pichegru had thrown the 'Rhin' on the Austrians in his front day after day from the 18th November, fighting fiercely, but making small progress, for Wurmser felt that it was a question of holding Alsace, the province which was so dear to him, and which he, a native of the land, thought he had won back for Austria. On the right by the Rhine Desaix fought under the eye of the well-pleased Pichegru, and in the centre Michaud tried for the Brumath wood, but both were beaten off. On the extreme left, however, Burcy's division (in which Oudinot served), supported by a brigade from Ferino, was successful in throwing back Hotze, who was on its front. As the progress of this division threatened to turn Buchsweiler, Wurmser, knowing that Brunswick was drawing back for winter quarters, a movement that Hoche believed was a retreat before him, became alarmed lest his right should be outflanked by the 'Moselle', and drew back for the Moder or Haguenau lines.¹

Inspired by the enemy's retirement, the French line advanced, and one brigade of Burcy's division attacked a wood

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 102-7; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 166-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas, Plate IV; Vogel, xxii.

near Mietesheim, part of the Haguenau forest, whilst Burcy himself pressed on farther north till he was close to Gundershofen, a little south of Reichshofen. Here the Representatives ordered him to attack a strong redoubt and refused to listen to his remonstrances. He was repulsed and, heading a Chasseur regiment, the only part of the brigade which was not broken, he sought and found death to avoid the arrest with which the Representatives had threatened him. The brigade fell back and rallied at Uttenhofen, but the other brigade remained for that and the next day, without any staff-officer or any orders, in the Mietesheim wood. Then on the 28th November, when its outposts were attacked, Oudinot, whose battalion was in this brigade, took command and, holding council with the senior officers, determined to keep the position: this he did although at one moment the brigade would have broken, had it not been for the behaviour of his own and another battalion. It was only at 4 p.m. that Hatry,¹ the Chief of the Staff of the division, brought orders to draw back, for until then this brigade would seem to have been overlooked. Hatry, whose name we shall meet often enough later, was made General of Division by the Representatives, and on the 1st December again attacked the redoubt, but was beaten off once more.²

Saint-Cyr had been opposed to this attack by the left, as, when it began, he considered that the right should have been thrown forward to save Fort Vauban, which was besieged by the enemy, and which indeed capitulated on the 14th November.³ Alternatively, Saint-Cyr advised an attack on the *émigré* army of Condé, which lay near Hochfelden, between Haguenau and Saverne. The council of war held by Pichegru agreed with Saint-Cyr, but Desaix opposed hotly, and urged an attack on Hotze's Austrians lying round Buchsweiler. Desaix was perhaps influenced by a very natural sentiment, for two of his brothers were with Condé. Saint-Cyr again argued in defence of his plan,

¹ Général Jacques-Maurice Hatry (1742-1802), an officer of the old army. Commanded the Armée de l'Intérieur, 10th March 1796, and the Armée de Mayence, 9th December 1797. Chuquet, *Hoche*, 115 note 1.

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 111-16; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 146-7; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 166-7. For map see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas, Plate IV; Vogel, xxii.

³ Fort Vauban, or Fort Louis, on an island of the Rhine, due east of Haguenau, Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas, Plate I. For this siege see Musset-Pathay, 299-310.

for, were Condé driven back, then Hotze could be attacked in rear as well as in front : also, supposing other things to be equal, it was better to deal with the *émigrés*, whose conduct towards their prisoners and the inhabitants he described.

The advice of Desaix, however, was adopted by Pichegru, this being the first of many such contests between Saint-Cyr and Desaix both under Pichegru and under Moreau. Desaix generally succeeded, but in this case he afterwards expressed his regret to Saint-Cyr for his mistake.¹ We have already seen the results of the attacks of Burcy and Hatry.

Some of the fighting on the right of Hatry deserves description, because there Frenchman met Frenchman, and the *émigrés* claimed a victory of which they long boasted. Also, whilst Saint-Cyr, without actually gaining in rank, received the command of a brigade, the end of the affair left him annoyed and mystified to an amusing extent. His general, Ferino, advanced slowly, fighting for every yard, and, crossing the Zorn river, reached Mommenheim, on the road from Hochfelden to Hague-nau. Here he had the Austrians of Kospoth in his front and the army of Condé on his left. His own left brigade, under Ferey, had received a check from the *émigrés*, and had lost some guns : it had then passed under General Pierre. Ferino wished Pierre to clear the village of Berstheim on his left, which the *émigrés* had entrenched, but on the 27th and 28th November Pierre fumbled in front of the position. He was an old officer, and, as it was not wished to remove him from his command, Saint-Cyr offered to take Berstheim and hold it till Pierre could come up from the bivouac to which he had retired. Accordingly on the 2nd December Saint-Cyr with two battalions rushed the village in a way which won the astonished admiration of the enemy.

Pierre should now have relieved Saint-Cyr, but, over-anxious to take his place, he brought his men up at the double without giving them time to restore order in their ranks. Consequently they came up straggling and the guns of the *émigrés* suddenly swept the first group, which turned and threw all the rest in rear into confusion. The young Duc d'Enghien led on part of the *noble* cavalry to complete the rout of the infantry, who lost their guns, whilst the Duc de Bourbon headed the charge of other squadrons on the French cavalry. Wounding one of the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 143-6.

Republican Hussars, he himself received a wound on his hand which forced him to drop his sword, till it hung only by the sword-knot. Fresh Republican horse came up and recovered part of the lost artillery and a colour: the Duc d'Enghien was for a moment surrounded, but was rescued, and both cavalry rejoined their divisions. Whilst his son and grandson were thus leading the horse, the Prince de Condé put himself at the head of the *noble* infantry and advanced to drive Saint-Cyr out of Berstheim. The rout of Pierre's brigade had, however, been sufficient warning for Saint-Cyr, who drew off in safety. By 6 p.m. the affair was finished, when some Austrian reinforcements joined Condé.¹

The Commander-in-Chief, Pichegru, whom the Royalists believed to have been present, placing the guns which were to answer those of his former Captain,² had really been away on the right with Desaix and Michaud.³ Believing that Pierre was too inexperienced in command, he now removed him from his brigade, of which he ordered Lt.-Colonel Saint-Cyr to take command on the 6th December 1793.⁴ On the 7th Saint-Cyr took over his charge, which was reinforced to make up for its losses. Getting Pichegru to allow him a day's interval before he really attacked, on the 8th December he began a movement which he describes as if it were a mere reconnaissance, but which the *émigrés* treated as a serious attack on Berstheim. Advancing and firing on some of its own cavalry, recently joined, the brigade soon met the squadrons of Condé, who began chaffing them and asking whether they brought them any more guns. Others, recognizing amongst the Republican officers of the 19th regiment some who had been *sous-officiers* under them when the regiment had been 'Royal Normandie', called on them to give up to their former chiefs the places they had taken. 'You have lost them for ever,' was the reply. Having pushed his skirmishers to the first houses of Berstheim and ascertained the strength of the enemy, Saint-Cyr drew off. The *noble* infantry followed him, under General Gelb, for they had insisted that

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 157-68; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 116-19; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 168; Bittard des Portes, 130-48; for plan see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas, Plate IV.

² Bittard des Portes, 132, 135.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 168.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 337.

Condé should not expose himself. The Prince, going to his cavalry, pushed them forward under the Duc d'Enghien, but this body was eventually thrown back in confusion by the French, and the *émigrés* lost heavily. Next day, licking his lips at the prospect of showing his skill, Saint-Cyr led his brigade on, when to his horror the enemy retired, leaving him disgusted and utterly at a loss to account for this step, which was really due to orders by Wurmser, who was drawing his army back to the Moder lines.¹

Here Frenchman had met Frenchman with all the gallantry, devotion, and mockery innate in their race. Three generations of the Condés, the Prince himself, his son, the Duc de Bourbon, and his grandson, the ill-fated Duc d'Enghien, had charged together: the Duc de Bourbon had been wounded,² and the Duc d'Enghien had his clothes so torn by bullets that the Prince had said, 'Voici des boutonnières qui appellent une croix de Saint-Louis' (the *Légion d'honneur* of the *ancien régime*): 'Nous la demanderons au Roi'.³ Condé himself had intended to lead the column of the *noble* infantry and had only left its head when some of the gentlemen-privates, finding their remonstrances useless, crossed their muskets in front of him, adjuring him to give them no further alarm. The General who took his place, Gelb, found an honourable death at the age of 76.⁴ There were, as we have seen, some strange meetings on these fields, and one wonders if Savary, who had belonged to the 'Royal Normandie', saw its conflict with its old officers, his former comrades. Amongst the Royalists, one of the mortally wounded, a Captain in the Navy and a brother of the future Director Barras, remarked on the groans of a wounded private. 'It would have been different', said the latter, 'if he too had a broken leg'; on which the officer showed his own two—shattered.⁵ The antagonists were not too embittered to ignore one another's gallantry: the *émigrés* admired the rapid charge by which Saint-Cyr took Berstheim,⁶ and, when the Duc de Bourbon cut his way into the ranks of 'Royal Normandie', a former *sous-officier*, now a

¹ Ibid., 168-77; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 119-24; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 168-9; Bittard des Portes, 148-60.

² De Rison, ii. 509, 512, 570.

³ Bittard des Portes, 147.

⁴ De Rison, ii. 518, 521-2.

⁵ Ibid., 515-16; Bittard des Portes, 146 note 1.

⁶ De Rison, 504-6.

Captain, was about to cut him down, but recognized him, saluted, and cried out, 'Vive Monsieur le Duc de Bourbon who has done us the honour to charge us !'¹

The Armée de Condé had suffered heavily in these affairs, and lost more in the retreat which followed. On the 25th December 1793 it crossed to the right bank of the Rhine at Neuburg-am-Rhein, below Lauterbourg,² and was no more employed in this campaign. Part of it passed for a time into the pay of England, but we meet it again in 1796. The fate of its members was a hard one, but here we find the chivalric *noblesse* of France, no longer lounging in the ante-rooms of Versailles, but shedding their blood for their King. Anything was better and more honourable than letting themselves be slaughtered like sheep in France. It is not for an Englishman to judge whether their devotion and gallantry might not have done more for their King and Country had they remained in the ranks of their original regiments. It was their emigration, whether necessary or not, which had been the main cause of the Republic's being able to seize the army for its purposes.

Drawing back slowly and in good order to the lines he had prepared on the Moder, Wurmser stood at bay there, and the 'Rhin', thrown on him by Pichegru day after day, and biting in on his forts, only broke its teeth on them. Desaix, as always, was on the right by the river, where Pichegru strengthened him in order to seize Bischweiler. Michaud was on the road from Brumath to Haguenau; Ferino was to the south-west of Haguenau. On the left, reaching to the Vosges, was Hatry's division, where Oudinot led a battalion.³ In one of the affairs which so constantly took place he received a wound in the head from a ball from a musket.⁴ Time after time Hatry tried to cross the Zinsel at Merzweiler, supported by the attacks of Ferino on his right, but always he failed. Still the army fought on, never giving time to Wurmser to offer any defence on his extreme right and holding him tied to his works. 'Ça va,' reported the Representatives, 'mais ça va bien lentement.' Wurmser, however, saw clearly enough the danger he was in.

¹ Bittard des Portes, 140 note 1.

² Ibid., 173.

³ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 122-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 178-80; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 168-9. For map see Vogel, xxii, and Saint-Cyr, Atlas, Plate IV.

⁴ Nollet, 9.

Let Hoche, he said, unite with Pichegru, and retreat is inevitable, Alsace is lost, and Landau relieved.¹ The 'Rhin' was doing its work well.

Hoche now joined in this struggle in the Rhine valley. He had been busy reorganizing the 'Moselle' after its check before Kaiserslautern, and amongst the Generals he was now putting forward were Taponier, who was entrusted with the control of the divisions first launched into the valley; Championnet, who became one of his favourites and who died in 1800 in command of the Armée d'Italie; Lefebvre, just promoted to a brigade, but soon to be given a division; the young Grigny,² the Chief of the Staff, who was to serve with Hoche in La Vendée; and, on a lesser plane, Soult. The 'Moselle' seems to have had a confidence in itself which the defeat before Kaiserslautern had not affected, and which may have been due to the novel spectacle it had enjoyed in seeing the enemy retreat so long before it in its advance on the Kaiserslautern position.

Demonstrating against Brunswick, as if he were about to advance again on Kaiserslautern, but really entrenching his left at Blieskastel and Pirmasens, Hoche began his march through the Vosges into the Rhine valley. On the 23rd November the first division (Jacob) arrived at Niederbronn, followed on the 5th December by Taponier, on whose staff Soult served. On the 12th December 10,000 more men arrived under Granget, and two days later the two commanders, Hoche and Pichegru, met at Niederbronn to settle their co-operation. Landau was known to be near the end of its resources, and, owing to what had happened in July, when Mayence had capitulated in ignorance of the approach of the relieving force, Soult was ordered to fire each night a salvo of guns, so that the garrison might hear.³ Attacking day after day, struggling on, whatever the result of each operation might be, wearing out their enemy more than overcoming them, the French gradually triumphed.

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 127, 129.

² Général Achille-Claude-Marie Tocip, alias Grigny (1766-1806), said to have been a nephew of Dampierre and possibly a bastard of a Picot de Dampierre, Tocip being an anagram of Picot. Killed when employed before Gaeta, under Masséna, in 1806. Chuquet, *Hoche*, 134 note 1; Chassin, *Pacifications*, ii. 486 note.

³ Soult, i. 86.

The first thing for Hoche to do was to clear his way. He intended to come down by Niederbronn on Wurmser's right. Two Austrian battalions lay at Jägerthal to the north-east of Niederbronn, and Hoche, who had remarked Soult in the Kaiserslautern expedition, gave him a volunteer battalion and fifty horse to sweep away this post. At a time when most men dreaded distinction Soult was already ambitious. He had only half the force of his enemy, but 'What would I not have done to succeed !' writes the old Marshal, telling the tale when even *his* desires for glory and rank must have been nearly satisfied. He threw his men in a mass on the Austrian right, and crushed it before their left could come up : then that wing was destroyed in its turn. The camp was taken, and the happy Soult returned with two colours and three hundred prisoners, besides the enemy's baggage. Taponier backed up his staff-officer, reporting that he had displayed '*une valeur républicaine*', and that his men had dashed in like heroes. 'This action', he said, hoping to enter Wœrth next day, 'announced that our troops will not long permit the enemy to defile the soil of Liberty.' Hoche also was pleased, and showed his confidence in Soult by employing him in detached commands.¹

A week later, and another future Marshal stepped into the ranks of divisional leaders. Taponier, who commanded the two advanced divisions of Hoche (his own and Jacob's), a good officer himself, got little help from his comrade, a true patriot, who said he had received from his ancestors (ought a Republican to have ancestors?) nothing but the germ of Republican virtues. Jacob had, as he himself acknowledged, but little military talent. He ought to have assisted in Soult's attack, but had not moved. Now Taponier planned a joint attack on Frœschwiller, by which he should take the position in front, while Jacob turned it. Instead of moving on the 15th December as arranged, Jacob sent in a dismal story of the state of the roads he had to march on, and of the bridges he had to make. Next day he would be ready. Taponier was not a man of 'to-morrow' and, suspecting his colleague, he rode to his camp. Lo ! the division instead of struggling with roads and bridges, was calmly resting as if in full peace, whilst the Patriarch himself did not appear. Taponier put the troops in motion, but it was too late to do

¹ Soult, i. 85-6 ; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 141-2 ; Vogel, xxii.

anything. In ordinary circumstances it was an awkward matter to deal faithfully with a patriot General, but the strain was great; each commander, and possibly each Representative, felt that his neck was in question if Landau fell, and, when Taponier's report reached Hoche, that General denounced Jacob to the Representatives. Caring little for rank, he gave the division to Lefebvre, who was still only a General of Brigade.¹ Jacob was dismissed, but so patriotic was he that in March 1794 he was employed for a time with the 'Ardenne', where we get a glimpse of him just before Jourdan began the relief of Charleroi.² He, like Soult, had been a Sergeant in the old army, so these promotions from the ranks were not always successful.³

On the 22nd December 1793, with three divisions (Taponier's and Lefebvre's⁴ amongst them, I presume), Hoche came down on Fröschwiller by the Jägerthal⁵ and Langensulzbach. Soult also with his detachment joined in, but the left of the 'Rhin' did not get up in time. The struggle was fierce, for the enemy held strong redoubts. A gun-shot brought down a tree, whose branches fell on Hoche. Extricating himself, he mounted only to have his horse killed by another shot. 'These gentlemen want to make me serve in the infantry,' he said, but he ended by at last succeeding in cutting his way into the Rhine valley, in which the part of the force now with him worked henceforward. The rest of the troops he was using were left in the hills, where Soult joined them. This fight was decisive as to the lines of the Moder. Fröschwiller, Reichshofen, and Wörth were taken, with sixteen guns, and the right of the Austrians was definitely turned. Wurmser accepted the situation, and, abandoning Haguenau and the lines of the Moder, he fell back on Wissembourg, Lauterbourg, and the lines of the Lauter, whilst the Armée du Rhin followed close on him, never letting him have time to concentrate against Hoche.⁶

The two armies, 'Moselle' and 'Rhin', were now in actual

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 144-5.

² Lejeune, 14.

³ Général Philippe-Joseph Jacob (1765-died after 1820); Chuquet, *Hoche*, 145 note 1.

⁴ Both Chuquet, *Hoche*, 128, and Le Grand, 211, for some reason that I do not understand, treat Lefebvre's division (late Jacob) as part of the 'Rhin', which it was not.

⁵ Soult, i. 88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 88-9.

touch, and the question of the supreme command must soon have become urgent in any case. Pichegru seems to have been at Wœrth for a short time,¹ probably he did not interfere with Hoche, but the rough Lefebvre now brought to a point the jealousy which already existed between the two commanders. Pichegru, who had had his own successes, had good reason for considering that the supreme command of the two armies fell to him from the moment they joined, and he sent orders to Lefebvre, commanding the division of the 'Moselle' nearest him, calling him in towards the 'Rhin'. Lefebvre, not considering himself under Pichegru, answered roughly, apparently also adopting some of Hoche's favourite phrases, that he had better be left where he was and not be called in. Pichegru wrote to Hoche on the 23rd December complaining that Lefebvre had ignored his authority, and asking that he should be replaced by Blondeau, another General of the 'Moselle'.² He also referred to the rivalry between the two armies. Angry as Hoche already was with Pichegru, this set him in a flame, and he wrote to the four Representatives with the two armies saying that Pichegru called on him to get rid of the only General on whom he could count to guard his right flank, and this because Lefebvre, rough it was true, had written rudely. Pichegru had spoken of rivalry, Hoche would not say that any existed: what he feared was mean jealousy. Affecting magnanimity, but probably knowing what strong support he had, he asked the Representatives to give Pichegru the command-in-chief of the two armies by an authentic act, thus implying that there had been none before.³

Apparently it was this incident that brought the question as to the chief command of the two armies to a crisis, and it may be well to state all the details here, although I may be anticipating some points. It had been known that, should Hoche's plan, or rather that of the *Comité*, succeed and the two armies be linked for the final operations for the relief of Landau, then Pichegru, as the senior General, was to command both forces.

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 152-60; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 172-3. 'Pichegru n'a point commandé à Vœrth, où il n'a resté qu'une demi-heure,' Hoche in Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 43.

² Général Antoine-François-Raymond Blondeau (1747-1825), Chuquet, *Hoche*, 135 note 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 164; Cunéo d'Ornano, 35-6.

For this reason Hoche, when appointed to the 'Moselle', had not been given the title of Commander-in-Chief which he would otherwise have received, but only that of General of Division commanding that army. Consequently, when the armies met, the Representatives with the 'Rhin' treated Pichegru as being in chief command, a position which he held for a day, the 22nd December, or possibly for two days.¹ The Representatives with the 'Moselle' professed not to have known of this. They and Hoche were intensely prejudiced against Pichegru: Hoche, with his nerves all on edge, took an unfair view of the situation. According to the plan, he and his divisions were to have burst down from the Vosges on the right of the Austrians in the Rhine plain; and he seems to have believed that Pichegru was to clear his entrance for him. Instead of any sudden dash down, he found himself steadily resisted, and his daily attacks made but little progress. This was not the fault of the 'Rhin', which had opposed to it an enemy strongly entrenched in excellent positions.

Had there been only one commander on each side, say Brunswick for the defending force and Pichegru for the assailants, the right wing of the latter, the 'Rhin', would not have been expected to make much progress: it would have done its duty by holding the enemy in its immediate front by constant attacks, whilst the left wing, the 'Moselle', turned the flank of the enemy in the plain, cutting in between his two wings. With the defenders the advance of the 'Moselle' would have been met by the whole force of the right wing, the Prussians. Hoche, however, had, apparently unconsciously, the great advantage Bonaparte was to have consciously in 1796, of striking at the point of junction of two armies differing in nationality and, in Hoche's case, having no supreme commander. From natural caution, and deceived by Hoche's threat towards Kaiserslautern, Brunswick was not bringing any large force against him. Yet Hoche's progress was very slow. On the 8th December, the day of Soult's affair, Taponier believed the next day would see him at Wœrth. It took him a fortnight to get there.² Held up in the mountain passes, Hoche raged and, perhaps naturally, threw the

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 171-2; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 182; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 200, 'Ignorant qu'un autre en fut investi'.

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 142.

blame on the 'Rhin', which he chose to believe should have swept on, clearing his way. The Representatives with him, Lacoste and Baudot, shared his feelings; what is more, they hated their colleagues with the 'Rhin', Saint-Just and Le Bas, and aimed at them through Pichegru, of whom they could have known little, but whom they denounced to the *Comité* as possessing neither the activity nor the audacity proper to a General, and as deserving to be dismissed or to be given an inferior position. Then, without waiting for a reply from Paris, on the 24th December they gave the supreme command to Hoche, and ordered the Generals of the 'Rhin' to obey him. This too without consultation with their colleagues of the 'Rhin'.¹

Hoche is supposed to have shown magnanimity in asking nominally that the command should be given to his rival. In reality his letter was an attack on Pichegru, and there could be no mistake about what he meant when he wrote, 'I am ceaselessly at my work and in no way occupy myself in inspecting that of others'.² Lacoste and Baudot naturally held firm and, when they met their angry colleagues, they carried their point. It seems strange at first sight that the arbitrary Saint-Just should have given way without any real struggle, but possibly he and Lacoste knew what strong support Hoche had in the *Comité*. Also this appointment coincided with the beginning of a series of successes for Hoche, against which Pichegru could not show any equivalent advantage: he had held his enemy, giving Hoche the opportunity of coming in on the flank and of playing a more spectacular part, just as Blucher's intervention at Waterloo seems at first sight more telling than Wellington's steady resistance. Anyhow, Hoche assumed command both of the 'Rhin' and of the 'Moselle' on the 25th December 1793.³

Such a position called for great tact and forbearance in the intruding commander. So far he had only the check at Kaiserslautern to his account, whilst Pichegru had already gained advantages in the Rhine valley. In any case, according to all military routine and even common sense, orders for the troops of the 'Rhin' should have been issued through its commander.

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 170-4; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 197-8; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 182.

² Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 35-6.

³ *Ibid.*, 51; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 171-4; Rousselin, ii. 57; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 197-8.

Far from acting with due reserve and sparing the natural susceptibilities of Pichegru and his men, Hoche actually came into the midst of the 'Rhin', giving orders not only to Pichegru but also to his Generals and even to his troops.¹ This was the more unwise as Hoche would have had enough work to supervise his own divisions. We shall find several left at a critical moment without any commander, whilst his left was away from all control. The natural consequence followed.

At first Pichegru played the magnanimous part and listened to the attempts of Saint-Just and Le Bas, to console him and to remove any discouragement, but on the very day of his supersession he applied to the Minister to be authorized to return to his former command of the 'Haut-Rhin'.² Then, as Hoche's interference became more galling, Pichegru sulked and professed not to know where his divisions, which received orders direct from Hoche, might be: also he sent his own orders to his centre (Michaud), through Hoche's head-quarters, a proceeding which that General in his turn resented. No army likes seeing its commander obscured. Ferino, for example, who was commanding the right of the 'Rhin', professed to be so deficient in ammunition that he could neither attack nor defend himself.³ The military machine, more than any other, jars for want of a little oil.

All this Hoche should have foreseen. Even as a Corporal in the Gardes Françaises he must have learnt how bitterly any interference was sure to be resented. Far from softening, he tried to drive the iron home into the heart of the man he began to hate, and on whom he now even threw the blame for his own defeat at Kaiserslautern.⁴ He wrote to Pichegru as if he were dealing with some subaltern, 'Il est assez singulier, général, qu'aucun des généraux qui sont sous votre commandement n'ait emporté de munitions. Faites en sorte qu'ils en aient tous demain à six heures.' On the 31st December he told the Minister that it was necessary to organize the Armée du Rhin properly, and the same day he actually issued an order announcing the union of the two armies as the 'Armée d'Entre-Rhin-et-Moselle', as well as the union of their two staffs. He seems to have had no authority for this and it was never carried out.⁵

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 201-3. ² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 173. ³ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 36, 37, 41.

⁵ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 203 note 2.

His personal spite showed itself in his correspondence. To the Minister he wrote that he did not know why the man who was writing to him from Haguenau, whilst he himself was fighting at Wissembourg, should spread reports that he had rallied troops who had never disbanded, or should send special couriers and even officers to Paris without leave from him or from the Representatives.¹ To his friends Lacoste and Baudot he wrote that Pichegru had given him no news for six or eight days, and he even declared that he would spare no one who betrayed the interests of the Republic by slowness, inactivity, or ill-will. The two men were made to differ, and one can fancy how, when Pichegru met the excited Hoche, he shrunk still more than usual into his shell. 'How phlegmatic this Pichegru is !' said Hoche ; 'the man's cheeks seemed to me like marble.'²

The unwisdom of Hoche's direct intervention with the 'Rhin' soon became evident. After his success at Fröschwiller and Wörth, he left his own troops and went to look after those of Pichegru. His immediate left, not counting the force far way under René Moreaux, marched from Wörth by the Malenthal and through the hills for Wissembourg. Before the victory of these divisions at Reichshofen, Pichegru had believed that their progress was delayed by their ignorance of the ground, and, believing he himself was controlling both armies, on the 22nd December he ordered Saint-Cyr to Lembach, where he meant to send him orders for the direction of the force coming through the Vosges. Saint-Cyr, who, as we have seen, was commanding a brigade under Ferino, handed it over and started for his post. He was glad to do so, as one of the Representatives, Lacoste, wanted to force him to accept the rank of General and to replace Ferino, a man whom Saint-Cyr esteemed.³ This was a characteristic idea of the Representative, for Ferino was an excellent officer. Italian by birth, he had been long in the Austrian service, and had acquired much of German gravity. His appearance was soldierlike : he was distinguished by his talents and qualities, and was strict in his discipline. The licence of the young soldiers he commanded enraged him, and his complaints had led to his being removed for a time, although his services

¹ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 41, 42.

² Rousselin, ii. 144-5.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 182-3. Saint-Cyr says Lacoste, but that Representative was with the 'Moselle'.

were too valuable to prevent his being recalled. The man Lacoste disliked led the right wing of Moreaux in 1796, and, but for his bad health, which in later times restricted him to commands in the interior, he would have risen high. The Senate of the Empire was a retreat for such men.¹

When Saint-Cyr reached Lembach, he found it full of Hoche's troops in some confusion, for they belonged to different divisions: although there were twenty-five battalions with a proportionate strength of cavalry and four Generals,² Hoche had gone off to look after Pichegru's men, without nominating any commander to dispose of this force. As for Saint-Cyr, no one knew anything about him, and he learnt to his surprise and probably to his annoyance that Hoche was in chief command of both armies. Finally it was determined that Grangeret³ should command the Lembach force. As it was resolved to attack next day, Saint-Cyr, who knew the ground well from what had occurred in September, offered his services, pointing out that Pichegru had sent him on account of his acquaintance with the district, but the 'Moselle' Generals were far too much elated with their success to accept his offer, so he followed them, he says, 'comme amateur', let us say as a sharp critic, and he got his reward. That night, the 23rd December, Hoche's orders arrived to take position next day at Klimbach on the mountain road to Wissembourg. Once started, the divisions found they wanted the guidance of Saint-Cyr, who safely piloted them to the point indicated by Hoche.⁴

The force was now in the valley leading down to Wissembourg, and was not far from that town. Saint-Cyr warned them that in front was the strong position of the Pigeonnier,⁵ held by the Prussians, and that, even if they could take it, they still could not debouch on Wissembourg without the support of the troops in the Rhine valley, a part of the 'Moselle' and of the

¹ Général Comte Pierre-Marie-Barthélemy Ferino (1747-1816), Michaud, lxiiv. 94; *Fastes*, iii. 213-15; Thiébault, i. 476.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 189.

³ Général Jean Grangeret (1738-97). An old soldier who had risen from the ranks under the *ancien régime* to *sous-lieutenant*. Chuquet, *Hoche*, 136 note 1.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 183-5; *ibid.*, Atlas, Plates I and IV; Thiers, *Rév.*, Atlas, Plate VI; Vogel, xxii.

⁵ For the Pigeonnier and the position of the force see Saint-Cyr, Atlas, Plate II, bis.

'Rhin'. If they remained quiet, placed between the right of Wurmser and the left of Brunswick, as they were at the moment, they ran the risk of finding the enemy moving on their flanks and rear. What he advised was to occupy at once the heights on their right, whence they could watch the advance in the Rhine plain, and to send a brigade to his old camp of Nothweiler to secure the upper Lauter valley and to threaten the rear of the Pigeonnier position. All this seemed very timid to the 'Moselle' Generals: there was Wissembourg close in front, and they meant to breakfast there, so on went the column. Then the Prussians appeared on the heights to the right, and, as they grew in force, the column was halted and four battalions were sent to clear the heights. The attack was not delivered simultaneously: it failed, and the troops engaged fell back to Klimbach. The assault was to be renewed next day, but, though the Generals did not yet adopt Saint-Cyr's advice to detach on Nothweiler, they reported the plan to Hoche, who in reply ordered a fresh attack to be made.¹ Discontented with Granget, he replaced him by the Adjutant-General Jacopin, although that officer had the rank of Colonel only,² so that he now signed himself 'L'adjutant-général commandant la division'.³

Next day, the 25th December 1793, the force advanced towards the Lauter and again attacked the heights on their right, but this time in three bodies. Soult, who after Reichshofen had joined this force, although only a Captain acting as assistant to the Adjutant-Generals, was specially sent by Hoche to command two regular and two volunteer battalions in the centre of the attack, having on his right a force under Championnet, who, although only Colonel, described himself as commanding the left division.⁴ On Soult's left was another force under Jacopin himself. The engagement was long and, though Soult says they gained the heights, the troops again fell back into the valley after nightfall. Soult had done his best, and Jacopin, some of whose battalions had at first been broken, had

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 185-9; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 192-3.

² Général Jean-Baptiste Jacopin (1755-1811) had been in the ranks of the artillery regiment of La Fère in which Bonaparte had been an officer, and had risen through the volunteers. Served later in the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Chuquet, *Hoche*, 193 note 1; *Fastes*, iii. 10-11.

³ Soult, i. 94.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 92.

believed he was too rash, especially when it became a question of attacking at night. Had Soult, he wrote, really received the order to attack at night? Had not the orderly gone astray, and was it certain that Hoche meant a night attack? Jacopin's Republican prudence suggested to him the following reflections: Were their battalions sufficiently trained for a night attack? If, unfortunately, they were repulsed, how could they rally at night men that it had been difficult to rally that very morning? Finally, should not a subordinate be penetrated with this sentiment: That it is often very prudent, very advantageous for the public service, to weigh the orders he receives with existing circumstances.¹

On the other hand Championnet on the right considered that Soult had done nothing, and ordered him to attack with his whole force next day, when they must sleep at Wissembourg. Soult, he hoped, would second him and not give any quarter, but Championnet himself could only advance when Soult was abreast of him. The end of all this was that Championnet reported Soult to Hoche for slackness, and Jacopin, according to Chuquet, accused him of temerity. Hoche, always hasty in his judgements and condemnations, at once sent orders for Soult to rejoin the staff of Taponier, while Championnet was to send his bravest officer to replace him.

Meantime Soult had come in, bringing with him his prisoners, and on his report reaching Hoche late that night, the commander understood the injustice he had committed. Indeed, he had already told Championnet that the movement of his division had not been quick enough, and now he told Soult to keep his command. All this is a good specimen of the strange confusion which so often reigned in the Revolutionary armies and much of which was due to the inexperience of many of the officers. Disregarding ordinary precedence did not always result in a clear gain.²

As in the previous case where both Soult and Saint-Cyr were present together, neither Marshal in his account mentions the other. It must have been with some grim amusement that Saint-Cyr looked on at the failures of the Generals of the

¹ Ibid., 88-94.

² Ibid., 92-5; Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 37, filling in the vacant name with 'Soult'; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 194.

'Moselle', due, as he believed, to their neglect of his advice. Now, assembling in council, they determine to do as he advised and to send a brigade next day, the 26th December, under Grenier, north-west up the Lauter to the heights between Bobenthal and Nothweiler, to menace the right and rear of the Prussians at the Pigeonnier. Saint-Cyr was to accompany Grenier and to point out the best ground, whilst the rest of the force prepared for a fresh attack. Hoche no doubt was informed of the plan, and by this time he had probably heard something of Saint-Cyr from Pichegru, or more likely from Ferino. In any case, as the brigade started, orders came from Hoche that Saint-Cyr was to command it. The main body of the force had hitherto been so jammed in its valley and had made its attacks with so few troops that the Prussians did not realize with how strong a body they had to deal, and, as Saint-Cyr marched away, they attacked in their turn. Now they discovered Jacopin's strength, and, alarmed by Saint-Cyr's threatening their rear, they drew back on Wissembourg. Then below them and Jacopin came a regular battle, waged by the divisions under Hoche, which ended by the Prussians evacuating the Pigeonnier in consequence of the progress made by Hoche in front of Wissembourg. Jacopin's force could then have debouched on Wissembourg and have tried to cut off the enemy retiring before Hoche from the Lauter; but, perhaps intimidated by the affair in the morning, the troops, whom Saint-Cyr had found so full of dash, now missed the golden opportunity.¹

While Saint-Cyr believed that his movement decided the retreat of Brunswick and of Wurmser, the success of the campaign and the question of the retention by Hoche of the chief command was really settled down in the plain and on the roots of the Vosges. Both sides had determined to make a general attack on this day, 26th December 1793, and, whilst Saint-Cyr was demonstrating far up the Lauter valley, Soult, whom he had left behind in the valley, Lefebvre, and perhaps Oudinot at the foot of the Vosges, and Desaix by the river, were heavily engaged. The old trooper Wurmser, who on the 25th had comforted himself for his retreat by leading four squadrons of his cavalry in a successful charge, had meant to stand with the support of Brunswick, but on the morning of the 26th he had

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 190-6; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 192-5.

made up his mind to retire when the French advanced.¹ Hoche was feverishly anxious to finish, for he well knew that he was playing for his head. Ill was it for the man who offended Saint-Just, and had Hoche now failed, he could no longer hope for the support of Carnot and of the *Comité*, and he would have paid dearly for his supersession of Pichegru. Consequently he showered orders and appeals, coarse and vigorous, to his Generals: Morlot was told, 'Courage, foutre'; poor Simon was addressed 'Marche donc, petit bougre', and Desaix was informed that 'Jamais un général républicain ne doit calculer avec la nature', and that with bayonets and bread they could conquer all the brigands of Europe.²

On the right Desaix, with his division of the 'Rhin', attacked Lauterbourg, and in the centre Michaud with another 'Rhin' division attacked Schleithal. Pichegru himself, according to Hoche, was far in rear at Haguenau.³ But it was on the left that the important struggle took place. There Hoche attacked the Geisberg (a strong position on the right bank of the Lauter), and also Wissembourg, with two divisions of the 'Rhin', those of Ferino and Hatry, and two divisions of his own 'Moselle', those of Taponier and Lefebvre. Up amongst the hills Jacopin attacked the Pigeonnier. The men were as excited as their commander, for the news of the recovery of Toulon had just reached them, and they cried to Hoche, 'General, our brethren have gone to Toulon, we will go to Landau!' After a hard fight Wurmser retired on the Geisberg, the height which General Douai was to lose his life in defending in 1870, while most of his army began crossing to the left bank of the Lauter. Lefebvre was charged with the attack on this post,⁴ but as he was nearly winning the last crest, Brunswick himself came up from the Pigeonnier, where he had been during Jacopin's onslaught. Cautious and meticulous in the cabinet, the Duke was a true commander on the field and, breathing fresh courage into the hearts of the despairing Austrians, he threw Hatry's division back on Rott and held long enough to prevent Hoche from overwhelming the retreating troops of Wurmser.⁵

Still the victory was decisive enough, as we shall see:

¹ Ibid., 177-84.

³ Ibid., ii. 43.

⁵ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 181-90; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 174-6; Soult, i. 95-7.

² Cunéo d'Ornano, 37-9.

⁴ Wirth, 74.

Wurmser was making for the right bank of the Rhine, and Brunswick, much disgusted, was retiring down the river ; but all this was a retreat, not a rout, and it was not till next day, the 27th December, that Hoche entered Wissembourg. On the right it was the same. On the morning of the 25th the main body of the scanty remains of the Armée de Condé had been taken by the Prince across the river, but he had left a small body of artillery which, with the Austrians, held Lauterbourg. Desaix marched against the place, but the attack was really a mere duel between the artillery on either side, in which the *émigrés* professed to have forced the pieces of the Republicans to draw off. The two sides were near enough to taunt one another, Desaix's men calling on 'Monsieur le Marquis' to come out, 'this is the way to your estates', to which gun-shots answered. Like Hoche, Desaix only got in on the 27th when the place had been evacuated.¹ Hoche and the Representatives had expected more, and a victim was required. Donadieu was to give an example of the bad, and even sometimes cruel, effect of sudden promotions. In October, when he was a Captain of cavalry, Carlenc, then commanding the 'Rhin', had sent him to Paris with a colour which he had captured after killing 'l'esclave autrichien' that had carried it. Carlenc himself just 'bombarded' commander of an army, thought that this merited a distinguished rank for Donadieu. The unfortunate man was made a General of Brigade, and on the 26th December had led four cavalry regiments, with which Hoche had ordered him to charge the retreating enemy at the end of the day. Captain Donadieu would have gone at the enemy, when his regiment was launched, at all risks. General Donadieu hesitated.

Did Hoche know there were guns which would sweep his men? The responsibility was too great : he wavered and drew off. Hoche denounced him and he went to the scaffold.²

The Austrians had had enough of it, and Wurmser three days afterwards, drawing back northwards, crossed to the right bank of the Rhine at Philippsburg. Brunswick had tried to get Wurmser to continue the struggle, but, when he found himself alone, he drew his troops out of the Vosges into the plain, and

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 191 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 198 ; Le Grand, 198 ; Bittard des Portes, 171-7.

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 187-8 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 196-7 ; Soult, i. 96.

marched down the river for Worms and Oppenheim, taking up winter quarters by Mayence. Hoche followed, but he was too inexperienced to be able to gain any real advantage over the skilful Brunswick, and he could but hang on the rear of the enemy until he reached Speyer. Saint-Cyr's brigade, with another under Simon, was sent north from the Lauter valley by Silz to Klingenstein to flank the enemy if they tried to stand higher up, but it found no troops in front of it.¹ Soult's brigade was strengthened, and he was sent up the Lauter valley, above Bondenthal, where he reaped in some prisoners.

Whilst Hoche, using the right of the 'Moselle' and the left of the 'Rhin', had been fighting by the roots of the Vosges, Pichegru, with the right and centre of the 'Rhin', had pressed on to keep abreast. After entering Wissembourg, Pichegru pushed on his troops down the river. Desaix' division, which had left a detachment before Fort Vauban until relieved by Lefebvre with troops of the 'Moselle', occupied Germersheim on the 29th December, capturing much provisions and bivouacking that night within three leagues of Speyer, into which it soon marched.² Meantime Pichegru had stolen a march on his rival. On the morning of the 28th December he left Wissembourg with the four Representatives, Saint-Just and Le Bas of his own army, and Lacoste and Baudot of the 'Moselle', and went on down the river, believing they would come on the enemy making a fresh stand. Instead, they got right up to Landau, which they entered in triumph: the place had necessarily been relieved by the withdrawal of the enemy. During the siege and blockade the garrison and the inhabitants, with Dentzel, the Representative who had been shut up with them, had passed the time in a series of struggles between different factions. The dispute ended in good style, Lacoste and Baudot arresting all the partisans of Dentzel, and Saint-Just and Le Bas doing the same for the Representative's opponents. Thermidor released both lots.³

There is a good deal of human nature in Generals, and Pichegru would have been hardly mortal if he had not seized this opportunity of scoring off his rival and enemy. He hurried

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 197-8, 200.

² Bonnal, *Desaix*, 45; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 198.

³ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 198-219.

off a message to the Minister that the investment of Landau was raised : ' I have been there for the last hour : General Hoche will give the details.'¹ Then he and Saint-Just did all they could to deprive Hoche of the credit for the success. The Minister Bouchotte, that evil official, backed them up in every way. Pichegru, full of virtue and of Republicanism, was not the man to speak of himself, said Bouchotte, but it was he that had reorganized everything in his army, had trained it in a multitude of small engagements, and, displaying the most remarkable constancy, had led it on : it was he that had commanded at Lauterbourg, it was he that had commanded at Wœrth, and had been the first to enter Landau.²

It is pleasant to think of the wrath of Hoche, struck in the tenderest point of his vanity. ' You have been deceived,' he told the Minister ; ' Pichegru had not commanded at Wœrth, where he had been only for half an hour ; he was not at Haguenau but far in rear, when the troops had entered that town ; and he was not at Wissembourg on the day of the battle there, the 26th December, for the day afterwards he was only at Haguenau, eight leagues in rear.' Then, remembering that he must be magnanimous, Hoche went on that it did not matter whether Jack or Dick commanded the army, if the country were saved, but ' franchement, je te le dis, tu as été trompé'.³ His Representatives took up the running and were furious at hearing the *Comité* had pronounced Pichegru to be active and intelligent. Active ? he knew nothing of his army and always had his headquarters four leagues in rear of his troops : intelligent ? he was of every one's opinion, and on the same day and at the same moment issued contradictory orders. They did not deny his patriotism, but then it was so cold and inanimate, chilling the ardour of his soldiers instead of inflaming them.⁴ Probably there was much truth in all this, for Pichegru, as we have seen when he was with the ' Nord' in 1794, had a strange knack of not being on the field of battle, but, now as then, he had to control a long line, and what Hoche may have gained by throwing himself into the struggle at one point, he lost in his grasp over the rest of his troops, witness the masterless condition in which he had left the column of Grangeret and Jacopin.

¹ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 196-7.

² *Ibid.*, 223-4.

³ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 43-4 ; Rousselin, ii. 45-6.

⁴ Chuquet, 224-5.

Whilst Hoche now moved forwards for Speyer with his right wing (the divisions which had come down into the Rhine valley, in which Lefebvre led a division, and Colonel Oudinot a regiment), the left wing under René Moreaux advanced in the Vosges and, driving back the Prussians, entered Kaiserslautern on the 1st January 1794. Pushing on they occupied Kreuznach, and one of the columns, in which the future General Richepanse served as Captain, got close to Bingen. Then the Prussians, alarmed at this advance, moved out in force, when René Moreaux drew back on Kaiserslautern. Whilst this was happening, the brigade of Saint-Cyr, which had been detached from Morlot's division of Hoche's wing, of which it formed the left flanking party, came up from the Lauter valley and reached Kaiserslautern on the 2nd January 1794. Saint-Cyr himself was annoyed at finding the place evacuated by the enemy, for, with his usual interest in his art, he had wished to attack a position which had been so much struggled for, but Hoche, remembering his own check there in November, thought Saint-Cyr was rash in wanting to move on it: he only allowed him to do so on his repeated application and then made him responsible for the consequences.¹ Here, as I have said, Saint-Cyr received a visit from Hoche and was rather scandalized by his commander and by the head-quarters staff.

We now get a striking instance of the bad effect produced on the Generals by the constant and unreasoning suspicion under which they worked. Hoche's immediate object was to take Fort Louis, or Fort Vauban, which stood on an island in the Rhine, due east of Haguenau. At this moment he received a demand for twenty twenty-four-pounder guns, apparently to be drawn from Strasbourg. Nothing seems more natural, but Hoche at once suspected a snare and wrote accordingly to the Minister. If he were to draw from Strasbourg so many guns with their ammunition, would he not be accused of wishing to place the town at the mercy of the enemy?² This was no groundless fear, and he knew the danger to which he was exposed, for he had been with the 'Nord' when the unfortunate Custine had been charged with the same crime for proposing to draw some

¹ For these movements compare the account in Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 206-9, with that in Moreaux, 79-97.

² Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 43-5.

artillery from Lille. However, it turned out that there was no necessity for a siege train in the case of Fort Vauban.

The operation was entrusted to Lefebvre. It would seem that he disliked the work, just as in 1807 he disliked the siege of what he was to call 'our good town of Dantzic'. Hoche replied in his usual hysterical style, 'Go, speed to Victory! In the war of free men against Kings it is enough to have your intelligence and, above all, patriotism and boldness. To take Fort Vauban it is not necessary to be Vauban.'¹ Soult now came with his brigade to join the besieging force, as did the future General Thiébault, and Hoche visited it, taking the opportunity to abuse Pichegru to Soult. 'I have just come from Pichegru,' he said: 'would you believe that I have not been able to get a "yes" or a "no" from him on any of the propositions which I have made to him? He has been impassive to everything. I have apostrophized him in a manner which would have made any one else's blood boil in his veins. His cheeks have not even reddened. What a man! And still Saint-Just protects him!'² Hoche's style was violent enough at all times, but, as for Pichegru's resenting it, Hoche was his senior officer, and he may well have seen a trap in the abuse to which he doubtless was subjected. It was believed that it would be necessary to send a force across the river to take the fort, and Lefebvre seems again to have required encouraging, for on the 16th January 1794 Hoche wrote to him, 'Du courage, f, du courage, et la République ira son train!'³ Two days later, on the 18th January 1794, the defenders withdrew, blowing up the works and town. They gave a magnificent spectacle to the besiegers, for the series of explosions was made the more striking by the background of a dark night. The delighted French lined the river bank and applauded or hissed as each fresh outburst of explosion and flame met, or fell short of, their expectations.⁴ Those who witnessed the blowing up of Fort Nicholas on the southern side of Sebastopol by the French in daylight can imagine the effect of similar explosions at night.

Lefebvre had already been rewarded for his share in the late operations. On the 10th January 1794, before Fort Vauban had

¹ Rousselin, i. 155.

² Soult, i. 99.

³ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 52.

⁴ Thiébault, i. 479-80. For plan of Fort Vauban, or Fort St. Louis, see Musset-Pathay, Plate V.

fallen, the Representatives had promoted him to be General of Division. 'This General', said the order, 'has shown sustained bravery, and has besides contributed to the success of the campaign by the skilfulness of his manœuvres.'¹ This was doubtless well deserved, but one suspects that the promotion was partly Hoche's answer to Pichegru's complaints. It was by a decree of the Convention that the Representatives were distributing 'récompenses civiques' to those who had specially distinguished themselves in the relief of Landau, and amongst these officers was Saint-Cyr, who also on the 10th January 1794 was promoted from Lt.-Colonel and Adjutant-General to Colonel and Adjutant-General. It will be remembered that, had he chosen, he could have been at least General of Brigade, if not General of Division;² indeed he was actually commanding a brigade.

¹ Wirth, 74, 468-9.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 183.

V

LAST PHASE OF THE WAR OF DEFENCE ON THE NORTH-EASTERN FRONTIER

(January to October 1794)

End of the rivalry between Hoche and Pichegru. The new chiefs, Michaud and René Moreaux. Saint-Cyr versus Blucher in 1794.

FOR a time the 'Moselle' settled down on the Pfrimm.¹ Its troops, especially those who had gone into the Rhine valley, had got so mixed that the army was formed afresh in six divisions, of which Lefebvre got the *avant-garde*, the strongest of all. He applied for and obtained the services of Soult as his Chief of the Staff, Soult being promoted Adjutant-General Lieut.-Colonel by the Representatives on the 7th February 1794.² Colonel Oudinot's regiment was with Morlot's division in the right (or Hoche's) wing, for three of the divisions on the left were placed by Hoche under René Moreaux. Saint-Cyr's brigade had belonged to Morlot's division: it was now placed at Kirchheimbolanden as the *avant-garde* of the left wing under René Moreaux.³ This change seems to have been distasteful to Saint-Cyr: at least he chooses to omit all mention of René Moreaux's name in his account of this period. The nominal strength of the army on the 19th February 1794 was 76,489, but its active force was only 47,665,⁴ probably less, for the left wing had only 15,457 effective on the 3rd February.⁵ Saint-Cyr's brigade, 3,011, was almost as strong as some of the divisions.

Saint-Cyr's brigade was frequently engaged and one fantastic experience seems to have pleased its commander, who always had an eye for spectacular effects. Some young artists from Paris formed part of the *Chasseurs du Louvre* in this body: they had captured some costumes from the Prince of Nassau's theatre, and had begun a dress rehearsal for a farce they pro-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 209.

² Soult, i. 100; Gavard, 9.

³ Moreaux, 95, 101 note 1, 102.

⁴ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 228-9 note 1. For the distribution of the army on the 18th March 1794 see Moreaux, 110.

⁵ Moreaux, 102.

posed to play, when the Prussians suddenly attacked. On the alarm the actors ran to the field just as they were, and the scandalized enemy, stiff Prussians too, be it remembered, saw themselves faced by Harlequins, Pierrots, and Scapins, as if they had come to a fancy ball. Fighting must be taken seriously, and it was but natural for the Prussians, after due explanation, to draw off, first drinking with their foe, instead of continuing a fight which, as the Highlander said when he heard the bagpipes of an Indian Prince, would have been 'just making a fule of the thing'.¹

The campaign had been a strange one, for the Austrians had been worn down rather than defeated. The French troops, bivouacking anywhere and anyhow, living on the country, swarmed round the steady, well-drilled battalions of Wurmser, at one moment racing to the attack, then falling back before the gallant charges of the enemy, but only to return speedily and to renew the teasing fire of the mosquito-cloud of their skirmishers.² The very way in which Hoche's columns straggled down the gorges of the Vosges had made their attack the more bewildering, for every few days a fresh foe presented himself. Eagerness and rapidity had carried the day over the fine battalions of Austria. An *émigré*, watching an attack delivered by Ferino's division, says, 'We saw the plain suddenly covered by an immense number of soldiers scattered over the ground, who, starting from the crest of the heights occupied by the Republicans, made at full speed for the village of Berstheim. Hardly had they got within pistol-shot than they formed in squads, even in battalions, to rush the attack of this post, which had become so important to them. Our eyes had hardly time to observe this manœuvre, whose object we had not yet grasped, when Berstheim was in the power of the Republicans. This bold stroke in an instant nullified all the effect of our artillery. Homage to the soldiers of our country, perhaps the only ones in Europe capable of executing such an enterprise!' ³ The fine tenacity of the Austrians, always gallant foes, had a better chance in the open ground, and it will be remarked that the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 217 note 1. See the remark of the shocked editor of René Moreaux, 'Cette action, que raconte Saint-Cyr d'une manière si dégagée, fait voir que la discipline dans sa brigade laissait alors à désirer' (Moreaux, 96).

² Chuquet, *Hoche*, 241-4.

³ De Rison, 504-5.

retreat of Wurmser down the plain was not pressed, whilst even in the hills Brunswick's skill kept Hoche at arm's length from the Prussians. Victory came partly from the want of unity in the operations of the Allies and partly from their inferiority in numbers, but chiefly from such a happy use of the qualities of the French soldier that it is no wonder that the enemy believed they had been beaten by plans prepared under Louis XIV by Villars and Vauban.

The troops had become very confident in themselves. For instance, to anticipate a little, when operations began again in the spring of 1794, Saint-Cyr's body of flankers, two battalions of old infantry regiments with some Chasseurs-à-cheval, was attacked by the light troops of the enemy, who dashed out of a wood and ran on them with loud shouts. Saint-Cyr's men, who were lying about on the ground, began to rise to meet the attack, but Saint-Cyr, always aiming at effect, told them to remain quiet as they were, until the enemy got within ten paces. The enemy troops were puzzled by such a reception (the more so because the French band struck up a comic air), and at last they halted, fearing some ambush. Then the Marseillaise was thundered out and, jumping to their feet, the French escaped from Saint-Cyr's hands and pursued the enemy for a league.¹ Indeed, the Marseillaise often enough told on the battle-field, for, however wearied and worn the men might be, its strains inspirited them and called them to fresh efforts and to victory.²

The joint operations of the two armies now ceased. It was evident that Pichegru could not be left with Hoche, for, however apathetic he might have seemed to Hoche, in reality he bitterly resented his supersession and his treatment by his rival. Old party feeling added to his enmity. Hoche belonged to the party of Danton, who was already tottering to his fall. Besides, had not Hoche been one of the Gardes Françaises, part of the *Maison* of the Bourbons, a connexion which had already been dangerous to others of that body? Consequently there was a sting in Pichegru's words, when he complained to one of his staff, 'They prefer a Garde Française and a Cordelier to me who am a Jacobin! If ever I meet this b—— I'll pass my sword through his body.'³ Such were the feelings hid beneath the apathy of which Hoche complained.

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 8-9.

² Le Grand, 192.

³ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 225.

The two armies had to be separated. Already on the 7th January 1794, tired apparently of giving orders himself to the troops of the 'Rhin', Hoche had written to tell Pichegru to come at once and take command of his army, whose head-quarters were temporarily at Neustadt, north-west of Speyer. This, however, was apparently not meant to give him a free hand once more, but as a sneer at his being, as Hoche alleged, always behind the fighting line. Then at last on the 13th January Hoche announced the formal separation as ungraciously as possible. 'The deliverance of Landau having been effected to the satisfaction of the Republic, the two armies remain divided as they were before the expedition. Hoche, commanding that of the "Moselle", recommends to it its ordinary activity and watchfulness.'¹ So ended an episode in which Hoche had shown how deficient he was in temper and judgement. One thing must have pleased him: it was not into the hands of Pichegru that the 'Rhin' was to fall.

Pichegru, if left in command, would still have been an awkward coadjutor alongside the 'Moselle', but he was snatched away to a higher post. Already on the 6th January 1794 the *Comité* had decided to propose to the Convention to send him to replace Jourdan at the main force of the Republic, the *Armée du Nord*, and the formal appointment was made on the 9th January.² On the 14th January he gave up the command of the 'Rhin' to General Michaud, a respectable but not gifted commander with whom we need not concern ourselves.³ The 'Rhin' remained sprawling along the left bank of the river from Germersheim to Bâle. Ordered to take Mannheim and Kehl, Michaud refused on account of the wretched state of his troops, and Carnot angrily consented to his taking up cantonments. No future Marshal was at this moment with the 'Rhin', for both Saint-Cyr and Soult had been transferred to the 'Moselle'. Desaix, however, remained with the 'Rhin', as did Lieutenant Savary, who had become A.D.C. to General Ferino on the 7th December 1793.⁴

¹ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 43, 48.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 206-8; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 226; Phipps, 275.

³ Général Baron Claude-Ignace-François Michaud (1751-1835), *Fastes*, iii. 399-401; Michaud, lxxiv. 21-3. His name constantly occurs in the wars of the Republic and of the Empire.

⁴ *Fastes*, iii. 540; Savary, i, Part I, 6.

As for the 'Moselle', in which Saint-Cyr, Soult, and Oudinot served, the *Comité* determined that it should undertake the expedition to Trèves, the difficulties of which had led to the disgrace of Kellermann and to the failure of the magnificent Beurnonville. Hoche in his turn found insuperable difficulties, for the army wanted most things, especially boots. In making appointments some inconvenience may be caused by attaching more importance to praiseworthy sentiment than to practical efficiency, and now Hoche had to imprison his chief officer of supply, Archier, who was, as he put it, 'more of a patriot than a commissary-general'.¹ But the gravest trouble was the disgust of the troops, who declared they had been promised a long rest when Landau should be relieved and the soil of the Republic freed from the invaders, as had been done. Disheartened by finding they were again to march, the men began to desert wholesale, the volunteers declaring they had taken arms to deliver their country, not to conquer fresh territory for the *Comité*. Hoche, however, in spite of his remonstrances, was ready to lead on Trèves, although 'with tears in his eyes and the most profound chagrin in his heart', when a fall from horseback sent him to bed with a damaged arm and shoulder. René Moreaux was charged with the preparations, and the army began the advance in two columns, Saint-Cyr leading the wing under René Moreaux and moving on Birkenfeld. At last Carnot and the *Comité* gave way and allowed the army to take up its cantonments.²

Here we have a characteristic trait of Saint-Cyr, who, cold and critical himself, still liked to watch and to play on the feelings of his men. Leading the column of René Moreaux, he was halting at the foot of the mountains, which he would have to enter next day, when he received the counter-order. He knew how welcome this would be to his troops, and indeed he had already suffered so much from desertion that some of his battalions were reduced to less than a hundred men. Still he kept the news secret, as he wished to test his hold over his troops, and next morning on the parade, as the men listened anxiously, probably believing in some change, and questioned

¹ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 55.

² Ibid., 34-62; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 227-31; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 214-15; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 217-19; Moreaux, 99-105.

one another whether the advance would or would not be made, he gave the order to move on Trèves. After a moment's hesitation the column moved off in mournful silence, but after a quarter of an hour of this trial Saint-Cyr was satisfied, the counter-order was given, and the column swung round amidst cheers which ran from the front to the rear for an hour. A little later, says Saint-Cyr, and no General could have kept his men with the colours.¹

The 'Moselle' now settled down in cantonments on the Sarre and the Blies, Colonel and Adjutant-General Saint-Cyr still commanding the *avant-garde* of René Moreaux at Saint-Ingbert and Rohrbach, on the road from Sarrebruck to Hombourg.² Colonel Oudinot was, I presume, with the third volunteers of the Meuse in Morlot's division of René Moreaux's wing.³ Hoche took advantage of this lull in the operations to marry, a thing which many men have done both before and after, but which his biographer, Rousselin, treats in the heroic style.

After his victory at Wissembourg the inhabitants of Thionville had intended to give a ball to celebrate the event, but Hoche was indignant at the idea of their dancing whilst his troops had no food, and he stopped it. Later he made amends by giving a ball himself, where he remarked a girl sixteen years old, Anne Adélaïde Dechaux, the daughter of a store-keeper. Not content with being certain of getting the girl, he determined he must have her heart. 'General Hoche will not want for wives,' he wrote in his grandiloquent style, but the Republican Hoche held too much to the principles of nature ever to force the inclinations of a person destined to make his happiness. The store-keeper, astonished, was all complaisance. An hour's interview with the girl showed that her heart was free, and on the 11th March 1794 the two went through the civil ceremony before a crowd of people and a large staff from Metz and from the camps of the army.⁴

Hoche's career was now to receive a severe check : he had been too loud, too emphatic, too masterful, too successful even for the Revolutionary Government, just as later the Directory did not care to have a powerful military chief, who might stand

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 219-20 ; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 214-15.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, i. 220.

³ Chuquet, *Hoche*, 228-9 note.

⁴ Rousselin, i. 159-67 ; Cunéo d'Ornano, i. 129-31 ; ii. 64-6.

apart from it, or might even be a peril to it. Saint-Just too was on his track and with Bouchotte pointed out the contrast between him and the docile Pichegru, the true patriot. Carnot, with the undying spirit of the War Office clerk, never able to understand why the man in the field sees differently from the man in the office, complained that the Generals only found things impossible which they did not want to do. In later years, with his usual whine, he professed to have saved Hoche's life, but at the moment he declared that it was time the Generals should learn that a terrible responsibility weighed on the heads of those that an involuntary error would not excuse. The *Comité* distrusted the General: even Robespierre, it is said, suspected him as a possible claimant for the dictatorship.¹

After the lesson given by Dumouriez it had seldom been thought prudent to arrest a General at the head of his army, especially if he had been successful. Now it was determined to get Hoche to Paris and then into prison in the safest manner. The first thing was to replace him and to get him away from his troops, so that his successor might have some hold over the army before Hoche could appeal to them. Jourdan, who had won Wattignies with the Armée du Nord, had been in retirement since the 10th January 1794. On the 10th March the Minister wrote to him that the *Comité*, counting on his patriotism and devotion, gave him the command of the 'Moselle', and on the same date Hoche was ordered to 'Port-la-Montagne', the new name for the unfortunate Toulon, to command, not the Armée d'Italie, as is often stated, but an expedition preparing for Oneglia. On his arrival he was to find fresh orders. Then on the 30th March the Representatives with the Armée d'Italie received a dispatch dated the 19th March from the *Comité*, signed by Carnot and Collot d'Herbois, ordering that the expedition to Oneglia was to be entrusted to Guillaume Petit, a General of the Armée des Alpes: Hoche on arrival was at once to be put under arrest and to be sent to Paris. In another letter the *Comité* explained that they had proof that Hoche was a traitor.²

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iii. 54; iv, 214-17; Chuquet, *Hoche*, 231-3; Carnot, *Réponse*, 145, 148.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iii. 54-5; iv, 217-18; Cunéo d'Ornano, i. 134; Krebs et Moris, ii. 16; Roguet, i. 499-500.

Hoche must have understood that his removal, which alone he knew of, meant a disgrace. Still, on the 16th March he issued his farewell order to the 'Moselle', telling his troops that under their new commander, Jourdan, whose name they knew, they could but annihilate the tyrant coalition against their holy liberty, a liberty he himself was soon to lose.¹ Then he handed over the command of the army to Jourdan. On the 30th March 1794 he reached Nice, where Bonaparte, promoted General of Brigade on the 6th February and given command of the artillery of the Armée d'Italie, was to arrive two days after, bringing with him his mother, his sisters, and his brother Jérôme.² Hoche, before allowing himself any rest, and without even taking off his boots, had stretched himself over a map of Italy and, after studying it for more than an hour, said that it was on the other side of the Alps that the true field of battle should be found for vanquishing the Austrians. Then, as he and his staff sat down to a frugal meal, the old General Dumerbion, who was commanding the Armée d'Italie, was announced. Hoche, who did not know the General, invited him to join him at his meal, when Dumerbion presented the order for his arrest. 'I beg your pardon, General,' replied Hoche, 'I did not know you were a *gendarme*.'³ Next morning he was sent to Paris, where he arrived on the 12th April. Here he applied to be heard by the *Comité*, and was taken there. Finding his enemy Saint-Just in the ante-chamber, he demanded justice from him. 'You shall at once be given what you deserve,' replied Saint-Just: indeed the *Comité* had the day before ordered that he should be arrested and taken to the prison of the Carmes till further orders. On the 16th May he was removed to the Conciergerie.⁴

So ended what had been the duel between Pichegru and Hoche, one almost to the death, for undoubtedly it was death that Carnot meant when he spoke of making a terrible example of Hoche. The two separated for ever. With the 'Nord' Pichegru gathered the laurels which were really won by Jourdan, but which have raised him so high in the opinion of careless

¹ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 66.

² Jung, *Bonaparte*, ii. 421.

³ For date of arrest I follow Koch, *Masséna*, i. 29; Krebs et Moris, ii. 16 note 3; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 218; Bonnal, *Carnot*, 174; but Jung, *Bonaparte*, ii. 422 makes it the 1st, and Cunéo d'Ornano, 133 note 6, makes it the 2nd April.

⁴ Cunéo d'Ornano, 133-6; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 216-17; Roguet, i. 499-500; Rousselin, i. 176-8.

observers. Still, to be just towards him, in the north, as by the Rhine, the relative position of his army towards the sister force in each case prevented his being the hand to give the most telling blows, and gave his colleagues the more showy part. As for his conduct in the theatre by the Rhine, he had done what was required of him. The duty of a 'holding force' is always a difficult and often an ungrateful one. With perhaps one exception, when the left of his army did not get up in time to support Hoche's right, the 'Rhin' had certainly done its duty, and in the instance when it failed in its support we do not know how far the blame should be laid on Hoche's failure to arrange for co-operation.

It is striking that, after all Hoche's successes and Pichegru's failures and villainy, Saint-Cyr should put Pichegru above his rival as a General. There one must leave the matter. Pichegru now went to the 'Nord' with some prestige, which he largely increased in the new theatre. We shall find him returning to the Rhine in 1795 to play a strange and dubious part. So great were his opportunities that, had his talents been at all equal to them, had he even been a General of the second class, we should have had to deal with him as one of the Marshalate.

As for Hoche, he went to what must have seemed certain death, for, unlike such prisons as La Force,¹ the Conciergerie was almost always but the porch of the guillotine. Hoche, however, was to spend more than three months there, both Carnot² and Barras claiming the credit for saving him from the scaffold; and of the two one would prefer to believe it was Barras. Hoche's sojourn in the Conciergerie had a great effect on his character. Amidst all the agony and terror that reigned among many of the prisoners, outwardly the society was most brilliant: the prison, says Beugnot, resembled a *parterre*, decked with flowers, but encased in steel,³ and, even with death so close, perhaps because it was so near, the manners were dissolute enough. Into this life Hoche threw himself with fervour, and, often melancholy before, he now became gay, drinking hard and living high, as if, says one of his admirers, he wished to leave as little as possible of his body to the executioner.

¹ Beugnot, i. 292.

² Carnot, *Réponse*, 146; Cunéo d'Ornano, 144 note 2.

³ Beugnot, i. 238.

His prospects were gloomy enough. One day, as he held a bouquet in his hand, a young officer (a connexion of his wife's) was called to the scaffold and, giving the General his watch, asked for a flower: so did his companions, who all mounted the scaffold wearing Hoche's roses.¹ Amidst these scenes Hoche's manners improved, and the rough soldier became something of a *petit-maître*: he even attempted literature, essaying a description of some of his companions.

On the 27th July 1794, as Hoche wandered, rapt in melancholy, through a dark corridor of the prison, the wicket swung open, and a tall man entered, bending under its lintel: it was Saint-Just, now a prisoner, for the Terror was over,² and next day the General wrote to his wife, 'I am free, let us render thanks to Heaven; I am going to rejoin you on foot, as becomes a Republican'. Going to claim some arrears of pay, for he had nothing, he met his friend, the Representative Lacoste, who persuaded him to remain and to ask for another command.

Accordingly he stayed in Paris, sending for his wife and going to Carnot for support in his application. At first he was offered a post as assistant in the office of the *Direction de la Guerre* of the *Comité*, but this he refused, and on the 21st August 1794 he was nominated to a command, but, instead of being sent back to the Rhine, he was sent to the struggle in La Vendée, where he was given the smallest army, that of the Côtes de Cherbourg. His first order to it is dated the 5th September 1794,³ so he must have left Paris several days before. He must have gone with regret, for all his love was for his first charge, as he put it, 'une grande fille que j'aimais comme ma maîtresse'. Also he still preserved his animosity for the sister force, the 'Rhin', which even in October 1795 he described as 'always the same, doing nothing, not willing to profit by the success of others'.⁴ We shall meet him once more on the Rhine in 1797, when his old love and his former dislike were welded together, but not under him.

The slanderer Barras has tried to use Hoche to injure Joséphine, representing her as the General's mistress. He says

¹ Rousselin, i. 185-6, 189-99; Cunéo d'Ornano, i. 141.

² Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 68. The date of his actual release, however, is generally given as the 4th August.

³ Ibid., i. 142-5; ii. 70; Rousselin, i. 200-2.

⁴ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 83, 180-1.

that she, although a prisoner, tempted him with accounts of her interest with the Government to divorce his wife and to marry her, with other statements one would rather not repeat.¹ Now Hoche entered the Carmes on the 12th April 1794, and Joséphine was placed there apparently on the 21st April, whilst Hoche was transferred to the Conciergerie on the 16th May. During all the time that Hoche was at the Carmes, Beauharnais, the husband of Joséphine, was also a prisoner there, from the 14th March till the 22nd July. In any circumstances it would be difficult to believe that Joséphine, a prisoner, should have represented herself to Hoche as powerful with the Government, or that she, who had plenty of worldly wisdom, should have been anxious to ally herself with a General who might at any moment be sent to the scaffold, and who was certainly in the deepest disgrace with one of the most formidable men in power. Add to this that Hoche's divorce would have been useless as long as Joséphine's husband was alive; and at that time, had Beauharnais only kept quiet, he was less likely than Hoche to be guillotined.

One suspects that Barras in his hate forgot his dates, for it was in the few days which Hoche passed at the Carmes, not in the longer time at the Conciergerie, that he and Joséphine met.² The only other time they had for dallying was in the interval between their release and Hoche's departure for La Vendée. Joséphine was not released till the 4th August, and Hoche took up his work in La Vendée on the 5th September. The effects of the Terror had not yet passed away, and the command of an army did not give any man the security for which Joséphine well may have wished. The whole story of Barras is incredible, even for those who have the worst opinion of Joséphine. Hoche had a noble side and he was very unlikely to offer, as he did, to take on his staff Eugène Beauharnais, if he had believed the mother of the lad was too vile even to be his mistress.³ As for his relations with Alexandre Beauharnais, Hoche seems only to have met him when in the Carmes from the 12th April to the 16th May, and then in the Conciergerie for the two days which Beauharnais passed there: yet in 1796 he wrote of his wish to have looked after Eugène, as fulfilling his duty towards an unfortunate friend.⁴

¹ Barras, ii. 52-4.

² Rousselin, i. 183.

³ See this subject treated by Masson, 242-5.

⁴ Cunéo d'Ornano, ii. 292.

On the 19th March 1794 Jourdan, the successor of Hoche, took command at Listroff. It is characteristic of the confusion in the War Office, which lasted until Bonaparte came to power, that the Minister informed him that the strength of the army on the 1st March was 100,000, of whom 66,000 were present under arms: the General replied that Hoche had handed him the parade state, and that he really had only 48,164 men present, including the garrisons, and of these many were unarmed, as the battalions of the new levy figured on the strength.¹ 'I am entirely without maps,' wailed Jourdan, 'none exist with the staff. The Generals of Division have none. You see that it is impossible for me to carry on the service without maps, and I request you to send me as soon as possible the collection of Ferary, for you know those of Cassini do not extend beyond our frontiers.'² The supply of muskets and bayonets was also deficient.

According to the plans of the *Comité*, the 'Moselle' was to have joined in a great movement of the 'Nord', 'Ardennes', and 'Moselle', in which the 'Nord' was to have played the principal part, whilst the 'Moselle' took Trèves and Liége and the 'Rhin' remained strictly on the defensive, as the Republic did not want to make conquests on the Rhine.³ These plans, and the consequent movements of the left wing of the 'Moselle' under Jourdan, will be best considered in the history of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Here it is enough to say that on the 15th March 1794, whilst René Moreaux, who had been commanding the left wing, now commanded the right with head-quarters at Blieskastel, Jourdan began moving his left wing on Arlon, which he occupied on the 15th April. To cover the next advance of this wing, René Moreaux moved forward, demonstrating as if he were threatening Trèves, and his right occupied the post of Kaiserslautern, communicating with the left of the 'Rhin' at Frankenstein.

Finally, on the 21st May 1794 Jourdan began his march for the north-west and for Fleurus, taking all his left wing, the divisions of Lefebvre (where Soult was Chief of the Staff), Championnet, Morlot, and Paillard, some 42,000 men, and so he disappeared from this theatre. Probably he left without even

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 220, 224.

² Jung, *Bonaparte*, ii. 421-2.

³ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 235.

seeing Saint-Cyr, who was not at Kaiserslautern when the General inspected that post: nor is he likely to have met Oudinot, these two officers now separating from their former comrades, Lefebvre and Soult, who went to the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' with Jourdan, whilst Saint-Cyr and Oudinot were to form part of the rival force, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.

Although it was not till the 25th June 1794 that René Moreaux became officially the Commander-in-Chief of the 'Moselle', yet in reality he commanded that army from the time Jourdan marched away in May, but Jourdan had taken with him all the best troops, and only three weak divisions remained. These were being filled up from the 'Rhin', but Michaud naturally did not send his best troops, and the condition of those who joined the 'Moselle', coming, be it remembered, from an army actually in front of the enemy, is instructive. The men were not all fully armed and equipped, and Michaud excused himself on the ground that out of 12,000 muskets promised him not one had arrived. As for wagons for the infantry (for ammunition, I presume), if he sent none, it was because eleven-twelfths of his own men had not got any. Even as it was, Michaud prided himself on acting in a much better way than Hoche, who, when he transferred battalions to the 'Rhin', sent no ammunition for them, or even for the regimental artillery,¹ and counted the battalions as having a thousand men each, whereas they had but a quarter of that number.² However, the man who sends, and he who receives, a draft are seldom agreed as to its value. 'Robbed me of my best men,' cries the one commander: 'Sent me all his worst ruffians,' growls the other.

René Moreaux himself had already commanded the 'Moselle' from the 24th September to the 1st October 1793, part of the interval between Houchard and Hoche. He, like Jourdan, had enlisted as a private in the infantry regiment of Auxerrois, and like him had served in the war in America against the English. Again like Jourdan, he had become Lt.-Colonel of a volunteer battalion, winning the rank of General of Brigade at Thionville, after which he had continued to serve with the 'Centre' and the

¹ The *pièces de bataillon*, guns attached to battalions, Phipps, *Nord*, 35.

² Moreaux, 142, 278.

'Moselle'. He seems to have been a little above the ordinary Generals of Division at the time: Saint-Cyr considered him weak,¹ but he had the good sense to value Saint-Cyr,² as we shall see. He is constantly confused with the more famous Moreau, with whom he had nothing in common, being a true-hearted soldier. He died from fever on the night of the 9th February 1795 when commanding the four divisions of the 'Moselle', or the 'Armée-devant-Luxembourg' (the army besieging Luxembourg).³

The departure of Jourdan left the forces in the east of France very weak. The 'Rhin' under Michaud, some 38,500 strong, but with only 30,000 effective,⁴ lay on a short line along the Speyer-Bach from Speyer and Neustadt to the hills, Desaix commanding the right by the river. The 'Moselle', though still weaker, 25,000 at most,⁵ was stretched along a thin cordon from Kaiserslautern to Longwy. In front of the 'Rhin' were the Austrians of Hohenlohe-Kirchberg, and the left of the Prussians under Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen. The 'Moselle' was opposed by the centre and right of the Prussians under Mollendorf, while it also could be struck by the Austrians at Trèves and Luxembourg. Dangerous as was the position of René Moreaux, he did not like to draw back, perhaps fearing to expose Jourdan. A vigorous attack might have crushed the 'Moselle', but the Prussians determined, whilst demonstrating along the front of both armies, to make their real stroke on Kaiserslautern. In the affairs that ensued both Saint-Cyr and Oudinot distinguished themselves. Seeing the danger of Ambert, who held the most exposed point, Kaiserslautern, Moreaux sent the Adjutant-General Saint-Cyr, whose advice he had liked, to that post, and Ambert had the good sense to receive Saint-Cyr well and to show him the positions held by his weak division, only eight battalions, a cavalry regiment, and two squadrons of Chasseurs. The battalions had in their ranks a good many recruits, undrilled, some badly armed, and others without arms at all. It is probable that Oudinot's battalion, the second of the old regi-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 44. Lacoste, the Representative, described him as 'bon patriote, mais incapable de commander en chef'. Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 238.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 19.

³ Général Jean-René Moreaux (1758-95). See Moreaux.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 12, 13; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 235.

⁵ Moreaux, 122.

ment of Picardie, and another similar battalion were better composed than the others.¹

Saint-Cyr advised retreat, for the 5,000 men of the division were too weak to hold the position, and were only embarrassed by the fortifications. Ambert agreed in the wisdom of this, but he had orders to stand and he feared the denunciations which would have rained on him had he abandoned so important a post. On the 23rd May 1794 came the sound of firing: Ambert mounted and called at Saint-Cyr's quarters, and the two, riding to the right, found that the 'Rhin' was attacked. The sagacious Saint-Cyr argued that, as the 'Rhin' occupied a strong line, the enemy would never engage it without attacking Kaiserslautern also.

Ambert then determined to retire, but he was too late, and the Prussians came on him in overwhelming force. It took some time to draw in the outposts, and Saint-Cyr, charged with arranging for the withdrawal across the Lauter, had to wait and cover the march of Oudinot's battalion, which had been delayed. At last the passage was finished; Saint-Cyr was given the right column, which was to retire a little south-east for Trippstadt in order to rally some troops who had gone back in that direction; Ambert himself led the left column, in which were Oudinot's battalion, and Marescot's company of horse artillery.

The Prussians had hoped to capture the whole division, but the retreat seemed secure and the more so as it had to be made through narrow defiles, so that the mass of the enemy could only follow. Saint-Cyr, placing his guns and cavalry in the centre of his leading battalion, got safely away, but the left column made an unfortunate mistake. It had to pass through a wood, the edge of which should have been held by the infantry until the guns and cavalry that were covering the retreat had got from the plain into the safety of the narrow road in the wood. Instead, the infantry went straight on, and the Prussian horse overwhelmed the few mounted troops of the French and took the guns, whilst the routed cavalry, dashing along the column and sometimes through the ranks, threw the whole body into confusion, and most of the men took to flight. Oudinot was of a different stamp, and, leading back his battalion, he not only

¹ Moreaux, 122-5; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 11-23; Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 175-84. For plans see Vogel, xxii; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas V.

repulsed the pursuers, but issued from the wood, and regained possession of some of the guns. Still, he could not carry them off, as the teams had been cut down. Then, swinging round, he followed the column, cut his way through a force of the enemy that had intercepted him by a side road, and eventually joined Saint-Cyr at Pirmasens. Here most of the division rallied, although some troops fled as far as Bitche and others joined the 'Rhin': indeed the Prussians might have been more successful had they not assumed that the division belonged to the 'Rhin' (which had originally held the post), and therefore would retreat in the direction of that army. Meantime in the plain below Desaix and Ferino had beaten off the attack made on the 'Rhin'.¹

Ambert declared that the retreat would have been an honourable one had it not been for the cowardice of a part of the troops, and, following his reports, René Moreaux in his order of the day praised Saint-Cyr and Oudinot;² indeed it probably was Saint-Cyr's conduct this day that made the Representative Lacoste declare that he ought to be made a General of Division, replacing another officer, Offenstein.³ Some incidents of this affair are interesting. Kleist had been pushed out by Mollendorf with a column to cut off the retreat of Saint-Cyr on Trippstadt and had succeeded in doing so (as he was to do with Vandamme at Kulm in 1813), but, just as at Kulm his column was wrecked by the troops of Vandamme in their flight,⁴ so now Saint-Cyr, coming on his rear as he was engaged in the attack on Trippstadt, threw his men off and got through.⁵ Colonel Blucher had been sent with a force of light troops to cut the communication between the 'Moselle' and the 'Rhin',⁶ but he was driven off. There is something comic in the indignation of Saint-Cyr with the Prussians for having claimed this day as a victory, for had they not been defeated by the 'Rhin'? And surely you cannot say you have beaten a small force that retires because you outnumber it by six to one in infantry and by more than twelve to one in cavalry!⁷

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 23-44 and Atlas V; Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 180-4; Moreaux, 125-30; Vogel, xxii.

² Moreaux, 128-9.

³ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 238-9.

⁴ This fact is often ignored.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 36, 38-40.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 17, 27, 43; Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 183-4.

⁷ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 43-4.

Much to the disgust of Saint-Cyr, the two French commanders, Michaud and René Moreaux, agreed with the enemy in considering themselves defeated, and both armies fell back, the 'Rhin' to Landau and the lines of the Queich, and the 'Moselle' to the Sarre. In one way Saint-Cyr was right, and the last operations had been to the profit of the French, for it was the prospect of a victory over the weakened 'Moselle' which had tempted Mollendorf to remain on the Rhine, instead of following Jourdan to the north; the small disaster in this theatre was outweighed in another by the victory of Fleurus.

Saint-Cyr himself, though serving with the 'Moselle', in reality belonged to the 'Rhin'. This latter army had suffered much from one Representative, 'le terrible Hentz',¹ and had lost several of its Generals, Delmas, Ferino, and Bourcier, the latter of whom had succeeded Clarke as Chief of the Staff and had been dismissed. Now Hentz was on the search for men with talents.² Coming to inspect the 'Moselle' at Sarrebruck, on the 10th June 1794, he ordered Saint-Cyr to accept the rank of General of Brigade, to which his command entitled him. Saint-Cyr would have declined, but Hentz was a violent man and, by threatening to send him off under surveillance, forced him to accept the promotion.³ Nine days later Hentz made him General of Division. Saint-Cyr again objected on the ground that his real name, Gouvion, was 'suspect', as it was that of General Gouvion, a friend of Lafayette.⁴ 'Is it only that?' cried Hentz. 'Can a brave man like you be hindered from serving the Republic well because there is a rascal in his family? You shall be General of Division: I will it!' 'Sic volo, sic iubeo', there was no resisting these Pro-Consuls and, leaving Sarrebruck on the 11th June, Saint-Cyr took command of the 2nd Division of the 'Rhin' on the 14th, though his official promotion was dated the 2nd September. Oudinot also, who had come well out of the last affair, was rewarded: his name was given as the watchword for the next day⁵ and, on the 14th June, when Saint-Cyr got his division, Oudinot was made General of Brigade, remaining, however, with the 'Moselle', and, I think, in Ambert's division.

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 236.

² *Ibid.*, 276.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 45.

⁴ General Comte Louis-Jean-Baptiste Gouvion (1752-1823), Pair de France 1814, Foucart-Finot, 84.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 46-7; Gay de Vernon, *Saint-Cyr*, 42-3; Nollet, 10.

The Armée du Rhin was now under Michaud, a modest man, who had tried to escape so high a command. He was considered by Hentz and by Carnot as too timid and too easily discouraged, but Saint-Cyr praises him,¹ and especially for his wisdom in accepting the advice which the new General of Division was ready enough to offer. Indeed, although Desaix usually carried the day in council, as he had done under Pichegru and was to do under Moreau, much was gained by the arrival of Saint-Cyr, who, coming from the 'Moselle' and knowing the two chiefs and the ground they had to work over, was fully resolved on getting the two sister armies to co-operate in their movements and thus to avoid the want of united action which hitherto had done so much harm. Meanwhile the armies had gained much from carrying out the *amalgame* of the regular battalions with those of the volunteers and by the reduction that it entailed; for instance, Saint-Cyr's division now consisted of four regiments, whilst in March 1793 the corresponding body included twenty-five units.

On the 17th June 1794 Michaud held a council of war at Landau, where his chief officers were present, together with René Moreaux and Ambert from the 'Moselle'. The Representatives took care to leave open the windows of the hall looking out on the square, where the guillotine stood 'en permanence'. The Generals might be good patriots, but would be none the worse for a tacit reminder of their danger. The opinions of Saint-Cyr and of Desaix as usual differed: the latter trusted in his cavalry, and urged an attack in the plain, where his division would play the chief part. Saint-Cyr argued that the infantry alone could be counted on, and that even they fought best when they opposed the solid Prussian battalions in the mountains: he therefore proposed an attack by the left. Desaix carried the day and on the 2nd July he tried his movement, but it failed, mainly from the rawness of his cavalry, and both armies resumed their former positions. In the next council all agreed with Saint-Cyr, whose plan was that Desaix at first should hold the enemy in his front, whilst Saint-Cyr worked along the lower western slopes of the Vosges, supported on his left by the fourth division and by the 'Moselle', which was to advance on Trippstadt and to try to turn Kaiserslautern. The third division of the 'Rhin' was to be kept as a reserve.

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 236-8, 276; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 47-9.

Both armies advanced, and the 'Moselle', from Hornbach and Pirmasens, forced the enemy from Trippstadt and occupied Kaiserslautern on the 17th July 1794. Its success, and that of the left of the 'Rhin' in the mountains, brought Saint-Cyr and Desaix to the banks of the Speyer-Bach.¹ One annoying incident had occurred, for a rash officer of Saint-Cyr's artillery had taken on himself to adventure the guns of the division in so exposed a position that Colonel Blücher, at the head of some cavalry, had carried off two of them, together with Laboissière, the officer commanding the divisional artillery.² Still, the enemy was disheartened, the Austrians retiring to the right bank of the river Rhine, whilst the Prussians drew back on Mayence. A little more and they also would have crossed the river, but the *Comité* sent off the 'Moselle' on the long-desired expedition on Trèves which had ruined Kellermann, Beurnonville, and Hoche. For this purpose the army was reinforced by 15,000 men from La Vendée, so that, even after leaving nine battalions to guard the left of the 'Rhin', René Moreaux had some 48,000 men.³ With these he moved north-west on Trèves, on a very broad front, the left column, in which Oudinot served, going down the left bank of the Moselle. After some fighting, in which Oudinot had his leg broken by a gun-shot either at Wasserbillig or in the pursuit after that position was taken,⁴ Trèves was at last occupied by the 'Moselle' on the 9th August.⁵ To anticipate a little, General Oudinot was disabled for some time, but on the 27th November 1794 he was appointed Governor of Trèves, a post which he held until the 25th August 1795.⁶ Whilst the 'Moselle' had been marching on Trèves, Robespierre had fallen on the 27th July 1794: the Terror was over, and milder Representatives came to the armies, the last act of the ferocious Hentz being to order the burning of the town of Kusel.

In the quiet time that followed, broken only by a sudden raid of the enemy in the middle of September 1794 on Kaiserslautern, which they took and then abandoned, Saint-Cyr amused him-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 45-63, 100; Moreaux, 148-60; Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 67-77.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 77-8.

³ Moreaux, 164-5.

⁴ Nollet, 10. Ambert, in Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 370, makes Oudinot pursue after the forcing of the Sauer at Wasserbillig, and Gavard, xxii, dates the wound the 11th August.

⁵ Moreaux, 161-73; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 100-2, 362-71; Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 77-8; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 287-8.

⁶ Nollet, 10.

self by trying to catch a party in a trap. Just as the Austrians, he remarked, were slow and cautious in attack, so were the Prussians ardent in assault and pursuit. With the Austrians it was necessary to seek them in their quarters, whilst one had only to show a detachment to the Prussians to see them dash out after it. To take advantage of this characteristic Saint-Cyr began what professed to be some new works near Dürkheim, when, as he had expected, his party was soon driven off by the Prussian cavalry. Again next day the work was begun with a larger covering force, but the Prussians returned, also reinforced, and drove off the French. Then in the night Saint-Cyr prepared his trap, a few men to draw the Prussians on the works, others to receive them in rear, and cavalry to fall on their flanks and rear. Dawn on the third morning found Saint-Cyr eagerly watching another General, mounted on a short-tailed, dove-coloured horse, Blucher himself, who was peering in the direction of the trap. Part of the French troops had been placed too far forward and had had to be drawn back just before daylight, and Blucher, with the flair of a partisan, suspected something and would not move till he had got reinforcements. Saint-Cyr now drew off, but though he missed his intended prey, yet in the end Blucher advanced in force, drove back the outposts, and came at last under the fire of the hidden troops, sustaining some loss.¹ Saint-Cyr acknowledged the superiority of the fine Prussian cavalry, 'the best military cavalry in Europe', commanded by such officers as Blucher, Wolfrath, &c., but Blucher, all unconsciously, was teaching his opponents, so that in the summer the French horse had received a much better training on the field than they would have had in the *manège*.

So far the two sister armies, 'Moselle' and 'Rhin', had fought what we may call defensive campaigns, always facing north, with but little direct reference to the action of other forces of the Republic, and, after the recent check at Kaiserslautern, Carnot had complained that the Republic, victorious elsewhere, always suffered defeat on the Rhine frontier. The true reason, he alleged, was that, while all the other armies had adopted the offensive, the Armée du Rhin seemed to have sworn to remain always on the defensive.² Hoche would have agreed, but the criticism was hardly fair, considering that some

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 105-15.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 292-3.

of the most important victories, those by which the 'Nord' and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had by October 1794 reached the lower Rhine, had been won by stripping the 'Moselle' of most of its forces, thus reducing it and the 'Rhin' to comparative impotence. However, all this was now to change: Pichegru with the 'Nord', in which Macdonald and Murat served, and Jourdan with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', in which were Lefebvre, Bernadotte, Soult, Mortier, and Ney, with Kléber and Marceau, had cleared the enemy from Holland and Belgium, and had reached the river Rhine on the 6th October 1794, Jourdan's left wing being at Coblenz, in rear of that part of the enemy that was facing the 'Moselle' and the 'Rhin'.

Here, however, with the arrival of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' on the Rhine, I reach a period in which the operations of the three armies, 'Rhin', 'Moselle', and 'Sambre-et-Meuse', become closely connected. I therefore leave the first two armies for the present in order to follow the fortunes of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and to bring its history up to this point. We must start from the time when, on the 21st May 1794, Jourdan marched for the north with the left wing of the 'Moselle'.

L'ARMÉE DE SAMBRE-ET-MEUSE

VI

FLEURUS

(April to June 1794)

The 'Jourdan' group of future commanders, and their school. The campaign and victory of Fleurus.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

4th May. French success in eastern Pyrenees: Spaniards evacuate France.

18th May. Defeat of the Allies at Tourcoing.

1st June. Lord Howe's victory at sea.

THE Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse, which played such a great part in the campaigns of 1794-7, is practically ignored as a separate force by most English, and by many French, writers who do not realize its importance. Yet, when the work of the 'Nord' was done, and the peace with Spain left the war with foreign Powers restricted to Italy and the Rhine frontier, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was a worthy rival to both the Armée d'Italie and to its sister force, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Indeed, in the campaigns of 1795 and 1796 on both banks of the Rhine it did most of the difficult work for its immediate rival, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', being always the first to cross the Rhine and diverting the attention of the enemy from the upper portion of the river, where the other army worked. Still, nothing is so surprising as the manner in which the fine fighting of this army has been overlooked, and the difference in title has worked in favour of its immediate rival. The very name, 'Rhin-et-Moselle', associated that force with the Rhine in men's minds, while the army called the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', to the careless reader, was hardly to be expected on the Rhine, still less on the eastern frontier of Germany, the point it once reached. To take one instance of the way in which the influence of this force is slurred over. Both it and its rival sent reinforcements to Italy at the end of 1796, when Bernadotte led eight infantry and two cavalry regiments, some 12,000 strong, from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', whilst the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' sent only four infantry and two cavalry regi-

ments, probably some 6,000 strong. Yet the whole of this reinforcement to the Armée d'Italie is described as coming from the 'Rhin' or the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.

This is not a mere question of words. Historians treat all the troops fighting on the Rhine frontier as one homogeneous body, and then, as Moreau commanded the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in 1796-7, and the Armée du Rhin in 1800, they assume that all the officers of the latter army, a very large one, were of the school of Moreau and were devoted to him. They oppose the mass of the troops on the Rhine under Moreau to the troops of the Armée d'Italie under Bonaparte. Now the officers and men of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', whether when still serving under that title, or when amalgamated with other troops, had none of the love and esteem for Moreau that is so constantly attributed to every one who had fought on the Rhine, and that tends to give to that General, in relation to Bonaparte, an importance that he never possessed. All that such men knew of Moreau was that in 1796 he had been unable to move until they had drawn the enemy from his front against themselves, and thus had enabled him to pass the Rhine. Once over, Moreau had acted as if the safety of his own army were his only care, and he never repaid the co-operation by which he had benefited. It would have been useless to look to men of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' for any admiration of Moreau and of his celebrated retreat in 1796, made successful by his desertion of his comrade, Jourdan. The fact that a great part of the army under Moreau in 1800, the army of Hohenlinden, came from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', did not, we may be sure, change the opinions of officers or men of that force towards him. It is, by the by, odd that, at the great victory of Moreau at Hohenlinden, of the three Generals of Division with him when the decisive blow was struck, two, Ney and Richepanse, came from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and the third, Grouchy, from La Vendée and the 'Nord'.

The Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse sprang into existence in June 1794 by the junction and amalgamation of the mass of the 'Moselle' with the Armée des Ardennes and the right of the 'Nord'. At its very birth, on the 26th June 1794, it won the important victory of Fleurus, almost on the field of Ligny, in a curious rehearsal of Napoleon's advance in another June. Then, acting always on the right of the 'Nord' under Pichegru, but by

its own victory and impetus, it swept the Allies from Belgium, and, after a fine victory on the Roer, it advanced until it saw the Rhine and made that river the boundary of France. This success removed all necessity for the existence of its rival, the 'Nord', which gradually dwindled away; the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had swallowed the 'Ardenne's' and henceforward it acted on the Rhine, where its usual position was facing east, with its right touching the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' by Mayence, whilst its left extended down the river to Düsseldorf, below which it touched, and drew troops from, the inactive 'Nord'.

Time after time in 1795 it led the way across the river, although its operations were crippled by the incompetence and treachery of Pichegru, the commander of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. In 1796 it swept through Germany until it saw the enemy's watchfires on the Bohemian frontier. Again the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', now under Moreau, failed it. The Archduke Charles was allowed to mass his troops against the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which fell back fighting, drawing after it the enemy, whilst Moreau retired almost unmolested until he was over the Rhine and was once more safe. Unfairly enough, the discredit of this campaign was thrown on the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which had retrieved many errors of strategy by its tenacity: all the science of the Archduke might drive it back, but never maimed it. So far it had served under the worthy, modest Jourdan. It then passed under the great Beurnonville. At the end of 1796, as I have already said, it sent a force to Italy under Bernadotte. It was a curious chance by which the regiments so sent, having nearly reached Bohemia under Jourdan in 1796, should then, after a wide circuit, have all but seen Vienna under Bonaparte in 1797. Hoche took command in 1797, and the army, adding yet another to its brilliant passages of the Rhine, was advancing victoriously with big hopes, when it was halted by the news of the armistice of Leoben concluded by Bonaparte. It was this army that furnished the troops for Augereau's *coup d'état* of Fructidor 1797, and gave its full approval to the stroke. Then in September 1797 the army lost its name and became the left wing of a new force, the Armée d'Allemagne, under Augereau, formed by a junction of it with the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', although there was no actual amalgamation of the two former armies. Roughly speaking, the troops of the former

'Sambre-et-Meuse' may be said, when 'Allemagne' was broken up in December 1797, to have formed first the Armée de Mayence, and then in March 1799 the Armée du Danube, under their original commander, Jourdan; this last army passed under Masséna in May 1799, when it was amalgamated with the Armée d'Helvétie (the remains of its sister army, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'), and all trace of its separate existence was lost.

The history of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' is bound up with that of Jourdan, whom we have already met in command of the 'Nord'. He was ever the same man, modest, earnest, sometimes blundering, but with a good deal of obstinacy that often helped him to achieve his purpose. He was liked by his subordinates, but did not possess sufficient prestige to carry him through evil days, and he was perhaps a little overshadowed by Kléber. He is too often judged by his work in later years: here, however, we shall deal with the Jourdan who had won the battle of Wattignies, who was to win the battle of Fleurus, not with the Jourdan known in Spain to the English when, a disillusioned man, obscured by the glories of the Empire, he was acting as adviser to King Joseph under circumstances fatal to success. In the most critical time of his life, the campaign of 1796, he was unfortunate enough to have Moreau as a comrade and the Archduke Charles as an opponent. One cannot follow his history closely without admiring his constancy. In his own account of a part of his campaigns he claims much for his troops, but little for himself. It was under him that Lefebvre, Bernadotte, Soult, and Mortier learnt their trade, and to these one might probably add Kléber, and might certainly add Marceau and Championnet.

Like its commander, the army was not strong in strategy or in science, and, with the brilliant exception of Soult, its Generals were better at hard fighting than in the council. Yet it has never got proper credit for its achievements: its conquest of Belgium is attributed to Pichegru, and its numerous passages of the Rhine are overlooked, but, if it was prone to get into difficulties needlessly, it had a knack of fighting its way out to safety, if not to success. It took after its commander in being, if I may use the expression, a very honest army, and it is impossible not to sympathize with its early hard-won successes and with its later undeserved defeats. Again, like its

commander, its officers were poor and never self-seeking. They were fervently patriotic, but, with all respect to them, in rather a bull-headed or blind fashion, seeing danger to Liberty in the Royalists only, so that they all, with the exception of Jourdan, fell readily into the net of Bonaparte.

I suppose that at this moment Schérer would have been considered the most important General after Jourdan, who treated him as his Lieutenant and entrusted to him many siege operations. He was destined to command two armies in succession, the 'Pyrénées Orientales' and 'Italie', and to win success with both in 1795. One thinks of him as a possible Marshal, but he failed, first by refusing in 1796 to carry out the plans drawn up by Bonaparte, and again when, after being an unpopular Minister for War, he took up the command of 'Italie' once more and in 1799 led his army to disaster. At the moment, with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', his eleven years' service in the Austrian army was a useful experience to him.¹

The prominent positions at once given to Kléber and Marceau may cause surprise, but Kléber was one of those men that seem naturally, and with the consent of all, to step into the first rank, and with him he would raise Marceau, whose patron he had been in La Vendée and whose life-long friend he became. He was the son of a stonemason of Strasbourg, and, being well-educated, he had joined, and served for seven years in, the Austrian army. Being unable to rise higher than *sous-lieutenant*, he left that service and returned to France in 1783. In July 1789 he entered the National Guard as a grenadier, and in 1792 became Adjutant-Major of the 4th Haut Rhin volunteers. His proficiency in drill and organization helped him to rise to the rank of Lt.-Colonel of this battalion on the 20th May 1792, and it will be remembered that he joined Custine's Armée des Vosges in November of that year. After the siege of Mayence he went to La Vendée as General of Brigade. Shelved by inferior men, he joined the 'Nord' in May 1794. He was six feet tall, well made, with fine eyes, and teeth as white as those of Desaix; he was careful in his dress, and he had an agreeable voice, whose tone, however, became like thunder in his frequent moments of anger. He was a fine General, loved and trusted by the

¹ Général Barthélemy-Louis-Joseph Schérer (1747-1804), Michaud, iv. 1279-80.

troops, but his was a difficult character. Every one of his superiors suffered from his captious and critical humour, but he himself had a rooted objection to command in person. Certainly he often seemed to wish for a high command worthy of his talents, but, if he were surprised into such a post, his convenient health would suddenly fail and would skilfully and firmly be made a reason for slipping his neck out of the yoke. When it suited him, he would as quickly recover. From now until nearly the end of 1796 he was the right-hand man of his Commander-in-Chief, who deferred too much to him.¹ Whilst, in the happy years, he shed tears at parting from Jourdan, in the hour of depression and retreat, with his usual disregard for all propriety, he turned against him and had to be withdrawn from the army. He seems to have liked Moreau, though their co-operation would not have stood any strain. Hoche he would not serve under. Early in his service with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' he took a liking for Ney, who soon justified his choice.

Who does not think that he knows something of the history of the young Marceau? After serving in the infantry as a Private, he had been in the National Guard, in the volunteers of Eure-et-Loire, and at Verdun and in the Argonne in 1792. The excitable, yet amenable lad rose in La Vendée to command the Armée de l'Ouest. Shelved like Kléber, he joined the 'Ardenne' in May 1794. He was now twenty-five years old and so little aged by his campaigns that, when he passed through Paris and presented himself on the 21st February 1794 before the *Comité*, the audience declaimed against the folly of entrusting soldiers to children. Then, however, his name was announced amidst cheers for the victor of Mans, where he had shattered the last hopes of the Vendéans of success in the open field. Although he had something of the hysterical nature of Hoche, without that General's venom, and although he was liable to sudden attacks of dangerous depression after reverses for which he thought himself to blame, the gallant, kindly hearted lad won golden opinions from friend and foe, and, had he lived, his place among the Marshals was probably assured.

I now come to a case in which I must make an exception to my rule that in these wars a man's military character may be said to have been formed by the time he became a General of

¹ Soult, i. 325-6.

Division.¹ Lefebvre had already reached that rank in the 'Moselle', but he had risen hurriedly, and it was in the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' that he established himself in the peculiar position he was to hold under Jourdan, that of rather more than a General of Division, yet not quite that of a wing-commander. The command of the *avant-garde*, the fighting division of the army, and the strongest, he won as a steady, sturdy, fighter, 'un fort brave homme en jour d'affaire', as Napoleon was to style him fourteen years later.² It is true that Lefebvre was no strategist and was rather dangerous when not under immediate control, as he showed by his impetuosity in 1808, but he was no mere thruster. Soult, who had been his Chief of the Staff and had commanded a brigade under him, described his 'digne chef' as not only standing firm as a rock when resistance was necessary, but as also knowing when to seize an opportunity of attacking. Indeed, Soult, an ambitious man, was glad to serve under so fine a type of divisional commander.³

It was in this army that Bernadotte rose to be General of Division. His selection by Moreau to command the troops sent to Italy at the end of 1796 was a tribute to his merits. He was thought highly of by Hoche also, and justified that opinion. Soult, as I have said, rose here to lead a brigade, after his valuable experience as Chief of the Staff to Lefebvre. He must have learnt a great deal of what to avoid in strategy, whilst in the field he showed his good qualities and firm resolve. The Soult who twice cut his way through to safety from a most desperate position in 1796 was the same Soult who rushed his way out from Wellington's toils in 1809.

Ney and Mortier, like Soult, were products of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Here Ney, when Adjutant-General on Kléber's staff, and when leading the advanced or rear guards, first of Colaud, and then of Grenier, gained the experience which made him such a formidable assailant, which affected all his career, and which led, as far as the army was concerned, to the command of a Hussar division. I think English writers generally ignore the fact that Ney was originally a cavalry officer, and almost what one may call a partisan leader. His work with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was excellent, although it may be said that

¹ Phipps, 2.

² *Corr. Nap.*, xviii. 187.

³ Soult, i. 163, 168, 172, 261-2, 293.

at Wieselhof on the 24th August 1796 he displayed something of the over-confidence that nearly led him to disaster at Foz d'Aronce in a similar retreat before Wellington in 1811. Mortier, without Ney's brilliance, had much of his fighting experience here as Adjutant-General under the sturdy Lefebvre. Beginning here as Lt.-Colonel Adjutant-General, he ended with this army as Colonel of a cavalry regiment.

As for other Generals with whom we are not so closely concerned, Hatry had distinguished himself with the 'Moselle' and the left of the 'Rhin' in the relief of Landau, and we shall meet his name frequently: he commanded the Armée de Mayence in 1797-8. Championnet we have also seen in the same operation, serving alongside Soult, whose career he nearly spoilt. He was long with this army, and, recommended by Hoche, rose to command the Armée de Rome in 1798. He died when commanding the wreck of the Armée d'Italie just as Bonaparte was taking possession of power on the return from Egypt. He would probably have been a Marshal had he lived. Morlot, after serving with distinction in many a campaign, died in March 1809 of illness contracted at the siege of Sarragossa.¹ Alexis Dubois, commanding the cavalry, seems to have been a good leader, but he quarrelled with the supply departments, who injured him in the estimation of Jourdan, and he left this army early in 1795.² In 1796 he served in Italy under Bonaparte. He died at Roveredo.³ All these were honourable soldiers, unstained by any connexion with the excesses of the Revolution.

I turn now to the detailed history of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Jourdan had been removed from the command of the 'Nord' in January 1794, but the support of the Representative Duquesnoy, and the victory at Wattignies, had saved his head from the attacks of Carnot. On the 10th March 1794, whilst he was at his little shop in Limoges, the Minister Bouchotte wrote to him that the *Comité*, 'not having ceased to count on your patriotism and your devotion to the country', had given him the command of the 'Moselle' to replace Hoche, who had incurred their displeasure.⁴ As we have already seen, Jourdan

¹ Général Antoine Morlot (1766-1809). Had been eight years in the ranks of the artillery. *Fastes*, iii. 444-5.

² Combier, i. 81-2.

³ Général Paul-Alexis Dubois, *Biog. des Cont.*, ii. 1429; *Corr. Nap.*, i. 865, 880.

⁴ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 217.

took command of the 'Moselle' on the 19th March 1794, but the attention of the *Comité* was directed to another quarter. The 'Nord' at this moment was cut almost in two, for on the 17th April the Allies, concentrating in the plains about Le Cateau, had thrown back the centre of the army on Guise and had then taken Landrecies. With a little daring they might have fallen in succession on the divided bodies to their right and left, when the road to Paris would have been clear.¹

The French plan of operations was now altered. On the left of the 'Nord' Pichegru, with a force of 70,000 men, in which Generals Moreau and Macdonald served, was to take Ypres and Tournai, and to make himself master of the navigation of the Scheldt. In the centre Ferrand with 24,000 men was to observe the enemy, advancing if the Allies in his front had to retreat, and watching the communications between Guise and Maubeuge, and between Guise and Avesnes. This body was to be reinforced from the 'Moselle', or from the west coast. On the right the Armée des Ardennes, under Charbonnier, and the right wing of the 'Nord', under Desjardins, 60,000 men, concentrating by Philippeville, were to cross the Sambre by Thuin and march north-west on Mons. Then the Armée de la Moselle, which on the 14th March 1794 had been ordered to push a detachment forward on Arlon, was directed on the 30th April, under cover of a projected expedition on Trèves or the Palatinate, to move the remainder of its force into the Namur or Liège country and to guard the frontier. Thus in the district with which we are concerned Jourdan, commanding the 'Moselle', was not to join the force consisting of the Ardennes and the right wing of the 'Nord', but to act on its right, or eastwards of it. No doubt the movements of each force would affect those of the other, but they were not to unite.²

The account of the proceedings of Charbonnier and Desjardins sometimes reads like the libretto of a comic opera. Joseph de Monfort, an expert in chemistry, sent to this force for ballooning purposes, found himself by chance in a room where the two commanders came to hold a council. Charbonnier, saying they were starving in their cantonments, declared it was necessary

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 34-59; Foucart-Finot, ii. 352-76; for the English see Calvert, 188-96.

² Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 88-9; Coutanceau, *Nord*, II^e Partie, i. 383-7, 501-7.

to cross the Sambre : on the other side they would find 'à gober les légumes et à pomper les huiles'. The more sagacious Desjardins agreed that it would be a good thing to cross the river, but it was necessary to arrange that in military fashion. 'Ah, tu crois ?' replied Charbonnier, 'Eh bien, concerte ça militairement : charge-toi de ça, toi ; moi je me chargerai de gober les légumes et de pomper les huiles,' whereupon Monfort thought it wise to leave the room.¹ Indeed, so great was the inefficiency of the two commanders that even the Representative Levasseur, after one of the checks that the force sustained, instead of putting it down in Revolutionary custom to treason, had the sense to write, 'I was dismayed. I did not know whom to reproach for operations so badly arranged. I did not see the shadow of treason, but the incapacity of the leaders was flagrant.'² There had been no one to make such an excuse for Houchard. Small marvel that this force was one of the most wonderful bodies produced by the Revolution. I have said 'the two commanders', for Pichegru, in disregard of his instructions and in defiance of common sense, had made no arrangement for the sole command of the body to be entrusted to any General, a point the more important as the success of his own operations depended on the strict co-operation of the force. He simply abandoned it to the joint action of Desjardins and Charbonnier, with the overbearing Representatives Saint-Just and Lebas, with whom he had had experience on the Rhine, just as he handed over his left to chance leading, that important body being practically managed by Souham, acting with the advice of Moreau.

The strangest thing about the force of Desjardins and Charbonnier was the way in which it fought, crossing the Sambre below Maubeuge time after time, but always repulsed by the enemy, and then retreating, sometimes in wild disorder, only to begin again as if it had come fresh out of barracks.³ Wellington once said he did not mind infantry running if only they came back, and he would have been fully satisfied with these troops in that respect. It may be said in explanation that the fiery Saint-Just spurred them on, but, if he had such power,

¹ Foucart-Finot, ii. 385-6. Compare a letter of Charbonnier's to the same effect, Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 121.

² Foucart-Finot, 397.

³ See Ernouf, 24-44, for the journal of a young soldier with his force.

surely, having brought them on the field, he might have kept them there. Between the 11th May and the 3rd June they made three crossings of the Sambre, and each time were driven back again behind the river with considerable loss. After the first attack the objective had been changed from Mons to Charleroi, and it was settled that the force was to form one *corps d'armée* directed by a council consisting of Desjardins, Charbonnier, Kléber, and Schérer, of whom the two last commanded each two divisions.¹

There were also with this force Colonel Bernadotte, leading an infantry regiment in the same division (Fromentin's) as Captain Ney of the 4th Hussars; Lt.-Colonel and Adjutant-General Mortier, probably on the staff of the same division; Marceau, commanding one of the divisions of the 'Ardenne'; and, later, General of Brigade Lecourbe, who had just been acquitted of *modératisme* and want of patriotism, his accusers being sentenced to the death he avoided.² It is curious to think of the feelings with which the calm, sardonic Kléber; the impulsive, hysterical Marceau; the rather pretentious Bernadotte; the somewhat phlegmatic Mortier; and the boiling Ney, took part in this shuttlecocking across the Sambre and in these headlong retreats. Kléber and Marceau, indeed, may have been prepared for such warfare by their experiences in La Vendée. But the most important lesson to be learnt lies in the failure of the Allies to profit by the opening that was given them to throw themselves on this unorganized force, to crush it,³ and then to turn on Pichegru.

Meanwhile Jourdan, in accordance with the Minister's orders, was making the movement with his left wing that I have mentioned in the last chapter. On the 18th April Hatry with this wing, 21,788 strong, and consisting of the divisions of Lefebvre, Championnet, and Morlot, occupied Arlon, and Jourdan went back to obtain reinforcements from René Moreaux and Michaud for a possible advance on Trèves. During his absence, however, Hatry was attacked by the Austrians under Beaulieu and was driven back south-east of Longwy with a loss of 246 men and 4 guns.⁴

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 93-213. ² Philebert, 53-89. ³ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 145.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-31, 403-14, and Carte 2; Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 114-17; Soult, i. 144-6; Championnet, 46-50; Moreaux, 112-17, 298-9.

This stroke of Beaulieu's, a slap in the face to Jourdan, was the more annoying as it looked so like a disaster to Hatry's force. Gillet, the Representative with Hatry, wrote that this 'mouvement rétrograde' ought not to be considered as a check: the army had not been beaten, and Arlon could be retaken when wished, while Hatry complained that the bad side of the event had been exaggerated.¹ Still the check damaged the plans of the *Comité*, especially as Landrecies fell to the Allies, and, Jourdan's objective was now changed from Trèves to Namur, as he had recommended. Jourdan now ordered René Moreaux to make demonstrations down both banks of the Sarre, as if for an advance on Trèves, to keep Beaulieu quiet. In fact the advance on Arlon had had the effect of drawing Beaulieu away from the Armée des Ardennes, engaged on the Sambre below Charleroi. Jourdan himself, leaving Sarrelouis, reached Hatry's force on the 2nd May.²

He next strengthened his left wing, the Arlon force, with a division formed for Hatry, so that what we may now call his own body was 56,014 strong, or, really, 31,548 effective.³ Although he himself retained the title of commander of the 'Moselle' until the 25th June,⁴ he practically ceased now to have anything to do with that army, and the troops he was taking north became a separate force. His own experience, and probably his own wishes, called him to the north.

It is important to remember that so far there was no question of a junction with the troops of the 'Ardennes' and of the 'Nord' before Charleroi, or with any other body; Jourdan's force was only a detachment from the 'Moselle', and it was not till the 3rd May that he told the *Comité* that he would leave the command of the troops of the 'Moselle' guarding Kaiserslautern to René Moreaux. The *Comité* replied on the 5th May that it would be pleased to see him put himself at the head of the army marching on Namur, provided that he left in his place for the interim a General who could be trusted.⁵ This looks as if the detachment were intended to be a temporary one. The point is not mentioned in Dupuis' work, but one is tempted to believe

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 412, 414.

² *Ibid.*, 413-14, 504-10; Moreaux, 119, 120, 299-302; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 227-8.

³ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 219-21. ⁴ Moreaux, 142. ⁵ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 507-10.

that Jourdan was doing more than the *Comité* intended, and was rather forcing its hand, especially with respect to the strength of the force he took with him. But indeed, although it is hard to specify the ground for one's belief, the commanders here seem to have become more independent, and to have acted more on their own views. Thermidor could not have been foreseen, the Representatives seemed as powerful as ever, and Carnot had just told Pichegru that, when all was ready for a great action, one or two of the *Comité* would join their colleagues already with him, 'pour aider au succès', just as a child is assured its nurse will be at hand when danger is near.¹ Pichegru was still in the hands of the Representatives, while we shall find Jourdan opposing even Saint-Just. Probably the fact that the armies were becoming homogeneous bodies, with ordinary *esprit de corps*, understanding the necessity for trusting their commanders rather than the civilian Representatives, had much to do with this.

Nevertheless, it was apparently a temporary occupation of Bouillon by Beaulieu on the 19th May that led to the formation of the Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse and the battle of Fleurus, for Beaulieu's stroke brought Jourdan first to Arlon and then down the left bank of the Meuse, which was crossed at Dinant. Moving slowly, owing to difficulties of supply, by the 2nd June his head-quarters and four divisions were round Stave in touch with the right of the force of Desjardins and Charbonnier.² It is hard not to assume, as indeed Jomini does, that this march was from the first meant to effect a junction with the Charleroi force,³ and we find Soult praising Carnot for the plan by which he believed Jourdan had been directed,⁴ but in reality Jourdan was only in pursuit of Beaulieu, and the confused instructions of the *Comité*, dated the 23rd May, directed him, after beating Beaulieu, to take Dinant and Charleroi, and then to attack Namur. It was only on the 1st June that he learnt that the 'Ardennes' was besieging Charleroi; he proposed to assist,⁵ but I doubt his knowing that a wing of the 'Nord' was acting with the 'Ardennes'. The Charleroi force, indeed, knew

¹ Carnot, *par son fils*, i. 498.

² Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 231-60 and Croquis viii; Championnet, 50.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 117; Thiers, *Rév.*, ii. 473.

⁴ Soult, i. 144-7.

⁵ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 537.

of his approach, but made no effort to co-operate with him, while the enemy hastened his attack of the 3rd June in order to forestall Jourdan.¹

Far in his rear things had gone badly : the 'Moselle' had had to retire behind the Sarre, and Michaud, drawing back to the Queich, wanted René Moreaux to get himself reinforced by Jourdan and to attack the enemy in conjunction with the Armée du Rhin. In former days this would have brought orders to send Jourdan back breathless to his own district, but common sense was growing in military matters and Jourdan, keeping his attention fixed on his front, went on, only ordering or approving the retreat of René Moreaux. I think the *Comité* approved of this, although there is rather a dubious passage in a letter of Carnot's, offering to reinforce Michaud from the 'Moselle'. If he only meant from the force under René Moreaux, that was too weak to do more than hold its own ground.² However, it was a great step in advance to recognize that the offensive need not be undertaken in all quarters at the same time.

It will be seen that this junction of three divisions of the 'Nord', two of the 'Ardennes', and four of the 'Moselle', had not come as the result of a skilful plan, and even now the question of the supreme command had not been considered, though the incompetent Charbonnier had been called to Paris and Desjardins placed in command of the right of the 'Nord' and of the Armée des Ardennes. The arrival of Jourdan had brought the strength of the force up to 90,000, and the *Comité* on the 8th June 1794 placed the whole force under the immediate command of Jourdan, subject to the control of Pichegru, who, as commander of the 'Nord', was to direct all the operations from the Meuse to the sea. It remained to give a name to Jourdan's army, but that did not come till the 13th June, when it became the Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse.³

Pitchforked into command of this motley force, the chance assemblage of parts of three armies, the first task for Jourdan was to get it into shape, and in this he was assisted by the recent defeats of the Charleroi force, which enabled him to get rid of some inefficient Generals and to bring forward Kléber, who

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 196, 199, 540, 542 ; Foucart-Finot, ii. 399.

² Moreaux, 126-32, 305-6 ; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 236-9.

³ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 261-5.

replaced Fromentin in command of a division of the 'Nord'. Marceau replaced Vezu in command of one of the divisions of the 'Ardennes'. It was determined to cross the Sambre again (for the fourth time for the divisions of the 'Ardennes' and of the 'Nord') and to attack Charleroi. For this purpose the army, as we may now style it, was organized as follows. Marceau was given command of the right wing, the two divisions of the 'Ardennes', 18,747 strong, which had to guard the passages of the Meuse and to prevent any flank attack by Beaulieu from Namur. This wing was treated rather as a separate force, and Jourdan said frankly that he had experienced some annoyances from the Generals of the 'Ardennes', who seemed to dislike him. It would be curious if Marceau had been one of these objectors, for in the end he had the highest opinion of Jourdan after some years of experience in the field with him.¹

Leaving a force to guard the Meuse, Marceau, one of whose brigades, of Mayer's division, was led by Lecourbe, was to cross the Sambre with 11,500 men on the 12th June 1794 below Charleroi, and to place himself with his right on the river, and his left at Lambusart. The four divisions of the 'Moselle' remained under the direction of Jourdan, and crossed above Marceau in two columns, Hatry and Lefebvre by Le Châtelet, Hatry undertaking the siege of Charleroi, and Lefebvre's *avant-garde* being in front of Campinaire; farther up the river, Championnet and Morlot, with Dubois' cavalry reserve, crossed at Marchienne-au-Pont, and came up on the left of Lefebvre. The left wing was given to two divisions of the 'Nord', that of Kléber (replaced by Duhesme), where, as I have said, Colonel Bernadotte and Captain Ney served, and where Mortier may have been Adjutant-General; and that of Muller. Crossing at the abbey of Alnes, it took post on the left of Morlot, Duhesme astride the Piéton (the stream which cut the battle-field from north to south, till, near the Sambre, it bent eastwards), and Muller on the heights of Courcelles. Farther up the river Schérer, with two divisions of the 'Nord' (Montaigu and Ferrand), guarded the Sambre from Thuin up to Maubeuge, whence Favereau was to demonstrate on the left of the Sambre.²

It is curious to think of the men here with whom we are

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 266, 272.

² *Ibid.*, 271-86, Carte 9; Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 125-7.

concerned, and of the difference between their positions now and when another French army passed over the same ground in 1815. In 1794 Jourdan, one of the most successful commanders the Republic had had, led a great army in which served Generals Kléber, Marceau, and Lefebvre, Colonel Bernadotte, Colonel Soult, Lt.-Colonel Mortier, and Captain Ney. In June 1815 Soult, Duc de Dalmatie, and Ney, Prince de la Moskowa, again were here, now Marshals in the army of an Emperor who in 1794 had been a General of Brigade, commanding the artillery of the army of Italy. Marshal Mortier, Duc de Trévise, crippled for the moment, was ill at Beaumont, stopped on his way to the army. Marshal Lefebvre, who had won a Duchy at Dantzic, a place of which he probably had never heard in 1794, was laid on the shelf in Paris, and Marshal Jourdan, his former fame forgotten, was in retirement. Marceau had died by the Rhine and Kléber in Egypt. Who would have told these men of their future now?

The body of the Allies which Jourdan had to meet had grown much as the force of the French before Charleroi had done. Originally it had been the corps of the Prince von Kaunitz, who had been Kléber's Colonel in the Austrian service. Some 27,000 strong, it had been the left of the force of the Allies under Coburg, with two minor bodies, Beaulieu with 8,000 at Arlon, and 9,000 by Trèves. Coburg himself, with his centre, 65,000 men, was at Le Cateau, Catillon, and Landrecies, with his right, Clairfayt and the English under the Duke of York, 30,000 strong, carrying the line to Ostend.¹ On the 30th May Kaunitz resigned and was succeeded by the Prince of Orange, the strength of the corps being raised to 33,500 men.²

It would seem that there would have been no difficulty for Coburg to have concentrated a force on his left large enough to throw Jourdan back, if not to maim him, but the commanders of the Allies had much the same dislike as those of the French for abandoning any part of their line in order to deal a decisive blow at one point, and thought more of winning or preserving

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 37, 79, 192.

² *Ibid.*, 115, 200-1, 283; *Calvert*, 231-2. There will be some apparent discrepancy between these figures and those given in describing the operations. This is due to the difference between the forces under each commander and the number he actually used.

some fortress than of settling matters by a battle. Also they were distracted by the attacks of Pichegru on their right by Ypres, and by the demonstrations along the frontier in their own centre, where the French made good use of troops unfit to take the open field with advantage.

The total force Jourdan now wielded was 96,000 men. Three years before he had been a discharged private, and so far the war had given him no lessons in strategy : small wonder if he did not make the best use of his force. His business was to beat the enemy, after which Charleroi would fall, but, instead of taking this view, he made Charleroi his first object, and the siege was begun by Hatry. The Prince of Orange had drawn back, but on the 12th June he began his advance with some 43,000 men, intending to attack on the 16th June. Jourdan, hearing of the approach of the enemy, determined to advance and meet them at Quatre Bras, or, as it was then called, Trois Bras. As Schérer's two divisions were not employed, Jourdan used some 58,000 men. Moving in a thick fog, the two forces met, and a severe battle ensued on the 16th June 1794. On the left Kléber was successful : Duhesme, bringing up Bernadotte with a regiment, took Trazegnies, and the enemy here retreated. Jourdan then conceived the plan of pivoting on his right, and of throwing forward Kléber across the Piéton to join Morlot, but disastrous news came from his right. The shaky troops of the 'Ardenne' under Marceau had been driven across the Sambre, and the lifting of the fog showed Lefebvre that his right was uncovered, whilst the height of the windmill, to be known in 1815, was occupied by the enemy. Taken in flank by the enemy's batteries and running short of ammunition, he had to retire by Châtelet : Hatry raised the siege of Charleroi, Jourdan gave the order to retreat, and the army repassed the Sambre, losing 3,000 men and 8 guns against a loss by the enemy of 2,796 men and 7 guns.¹

This defeat upset the temper of Lefebvre, never very long-suffering, and the want of ammunition bore the blame. In his report he describes how his grenadiers had to charge through the enemy's cavalry in order to cut their way back. 'I used up

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 289-302 and Carte 9 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 127-32, and Atlas IX ; *Vict. et Conq.*, iii. 44-5 ; Soult, i. 150-5, 191-4 ; Championnet, 54-8 ; Hardy, 68-71 ; Fricasse, 31-2 ; Pingaud, 74-5.

everything. I should still occupy the Campinaire position if the ammunition had not failed. I returned with thirty rounds for my light artillery: the battalion artillery¹ and the twelve-pounder battery had fired away everything.' In the rough style which had vexed Pichegru and which he never quite lost even under the Empire, he told Jourdan, 'Give orders so that for the future there may be no want of ammunition; for nothing is so disheartening as to see oneself obliged to abandon the combat, having nothing left with which to return the enemy's fire'.²

One defeat more or less made little difference to Jourdan, who, indeed, possessed the quality on which the English pride themselves, of not knowing when he was beaten; of this he showed some curious instances; and he was as ready to recommence as the stubborn Lefebvre himself. Also he had grave reasons for haste, as the withdrawal was raising a cry for his head, and it was important to forestall the discontent of the Representatives and of the *Comité*. The fog and the want of ammunition bore the responsibility for the retreat. 'If French writers had been better informed', wrote Jourdan, 'they would not have stated that the French army had been beaten, because it only abandoned the field of battle by a chance event at the moment of being victorious.'³ Siege pieces were brought up from various fortresses, and on a strange date, the 18th June, he recrossed the Sambre, this being the fifth time the French had passed it in May and June. Indeed, as Langeron, who fought in the opposite ranks, remarks, the French acted 'with an inveterate determination, which nothing can explain, and of which that nation had never given an example'.⁴ Everything was done as on the last crossing and now, as then, Hatry began the siege of Charleroi, which had a garrison of 2,800 men.

The Prince of Orange, who commanded the enemy in front, was not very anxious about Charleroi, which he had every reason to assume could hold out for a good many days, and he fell back eastwards for Rouveroy on the Mons road, to cover that fortress, ordering Beaulieu from Namur to cover the Brussels road by Quatre Bras. He then stood with his far

¹ See Bricard.

² Soult, i. 191-4; Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 299. See Parfait 194, to same effect.

³ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 301.

⁴ Langeron, in Pingaud, 75.

inferior force, exposed to any blow which Jourdan might deliver, if he were not entirely absorbed in the siege of Charleroi. At the moment Coburg, the commander of the whole allied force, was drawing troops from the Prince of Orange, wishing to strike Pichegru, who, with the left of the Armée du Nord, was pressing his right and threatening Ypres. Jourdan's first check on the 16th June had sent Coburg to join Clairfayt and attack Pichegru, but then came the news that Ypres was taken by the French and that Jourdan was again over the Sambre. It was a moment for throwing his whole weight either on Pichegru or on Jourdan, but, undetermined, Coburg hung in the wind at Tournai, till the Prince of Orange advised him to attack Jourdan. Remembering what happened in 1815, it reads strangely to find that his troops, brought from the centre, were to debouch to the south of the forest of Soignies by Hal and Mont-Saint-Jean, and attack the enemy by Quatre Bras and Frasne on the left of the Prince of Orange.¹ Coburg had no official adviser, Mack had left, the Prince of Waldeck was ill, 'and you know', wrote Calvert, 'it is against all the principles of Austrian etiquette for a Commander-in-Chief to act or think for himself'.²

Meantime the siege of Charleroi went on. The formidable Representatives Saint-Just and Le Bas, who had raged in 1793 on the Rhine, had now joined this force, where they met with some opposition from their colleagues. Saint-Just, to whom Carnot had sent the sabre he said he required,³ goodness knows what for, had had the good sense to look on at some of the fighting from a distance. Levasseur, a colleague, said it was not so far off that the Representatives ought to fight, and when Saint-Just, properly enough, asked what he wanted them to do there, Levasseur replied that the answer was that of a man who was afraid.⁴ No doubt the Representatives sometimes were in the fights, but it is strange how small was their practical knowledge; for instance, at the crossing of the Sambre on the 20th May we find Le Bas putting the loss of the French at 300, and that of the enemy at from 12,000 to 15,000 at least, that is to say, about half the force Kaunitz really had.⁵ This, however, is as inserted in the *Moniteur*. A report by Le Bas, putting the

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 305-8, 314-15.

³ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 227 note 1.

² Calvert, 246.

⁴ Ibid., 232.

⁵ Stéfane-Pol, 255.

loss of the Allies at from 1,200 to 1,500, is considered by Dupuis as 'probably exaggerated'.¹

The progress of the siege was delayed through the fault of the artillery, the gunners being young and inexperienced. Saint-Just then gave Jourdan a written order to arrest Hatry, commanding the siege, Bollemont, commanding the artillery, and Marescot, the chief engineer, meaning them to be shot on the place, but Jourdan had the courage to resist.² One unfortunate Captain was sacrificed to patriotic wisdom. Seeing the trace for a battery, Saint-Just asked when it would be finished. 'That depends on the number of workers given me,' replied the Captain in charge, 'but the work will be carried out without a break.' 'If to-morrow at six o'clock it is not ready to fire, your head shall fall,' said Saint-Just. As many men as could work at a time were put on, but the task was not completed at the fatal hour, and Saint-Just kept his promise.³

M. le Commandant Dupuis in his valuable work objects to this story, and gives the decree of two Representatives, Gillet and Guyton, stating that, as the artillery General Bollemont had reported to Jourdan that an artillery officer had neglected to carry out his orders, he was to be arrested and tried.⁴ If this was an ordinary act, one does not see why the intervention of the Representatives was necessary. Le Bas, as Dupuis remarks, had left the army, thus depriving Saint-Just of the 'douce et sympathique figure' of his fellow butcher, which modified the terrific effect produced by him,⁵ and Saint-Just did not sign the decree. Still it is to be noted that Jourdan reported that the artillery did not get on, but that Saint-Just was sending a court-martial into the trenches, which he hoped would give activity to the works.⁶ Marescot, the chief engineer, tells the same tale as Soult, describing Saint-Just as 'ce lâche proconsul, qui jamais ne se montrait dans les tranchées',⁷ which agrees with Jourdan's statement that Saint-Just was sending a court into the trenches. Anyhow, on whatever authority, the Captain was shot. It is a comfort to think that Saint-Just was soon to lose the head he now bore 'like the Saint-Sacrement'.

In a more important matter Saint-Just fortunately failed.

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 163-4 note 3.

² Musset-Pathay, 372-3.

³ Soult, i. 156-7; Musset-Pathay, 373.

⁴ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 288-9 note 2.

⁵ Stéfane-Pol, 237.

⁶ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 573.

⁷ Musset-Pathay, 373.

As foolish as he was bloodthirsty, seeing that the army of the enemy gave no sign of life, but let the siege go on without any attempt at interrupting it, he declared that Coburg would mass his troops on Pichegru to the north and, to prevent this, he ordered Jourdan to send 30,000 men to Pichegru. Had this been done, even Coburg could hardly have missed the moment, whilst this detachment was on the march, to have crushed each army of the French on his right and left in succession. It is difficult to understand the number, 30,000. Carnot had had the marvellous idea of throwing into the island of Walcheren a body of 16,000 troops, to be taken preferably from the Armée de la Moselle, whose fighting force Jourdan was using. However, even Carnot was wise enough to order that this plan should be kept secret from Jourdan until he had taken Charleroi and delivered a decisive battle. Was Saint-Just thinking of this idea? It is said that on his return to Paris he quarrelled with Carnot, alleging that the order for this detachment had been given without his being informed of it. But it is not clear to what he alluded. He wanted to reinforce Pichegru. Carnot meant to throw the detachment away from Pichegru into Walcheren, a much wilder plan, and Saint-Just may well have complained if he found he had been led into ordering it.¹

That Saint-Just ordered the detachment seems beyond doubt, but the position of the commanders had become stronger. Jourdan, though not a great General, saw the folly of following Coburg in order to strike where the enemy was strong. If Coburg had gone north, his opportunity had come, and most wisely he refused to obey without a written order, which Saint-Just was too cautious to give. Jourdan stood firm against prayers and threats with a courage for that period above all praise. Courage indeed was required, for he now knew that defeat, or even failure to gain a victory, must cost him his life: his name, with those of Lefebvre and Soult, stood on Saint-Just's list for accusation, and he had enough experience of war to know how much chance has to do with the result of a battle. After Fleurus Gillet, one of the Representatives with Jourdan, who was often useful to him, authorized him to send the men from the inactive divisions of the 'Nord', and the Representa-

¹ *Carnot, par son fils*, i. 487-8.

tives with the 'Nord' finally agreed to furnish the force themselves.¹

On the 26th June 1794 Charleroi was summoned, and the commandant sent out a letter presumed to contain his terms of surrender. For once the bullying of Saint-Just told. 'It is not paper I want', he replied, refusing to receive the letter, 'but the place'; and a few minutes afterwards Charleroi surrendered at discretion. The French were only too glad to get the garrison out, and the troops were awarded the honours of war, the officers retaining their swords and equipages.² Never did a commandant of a besieged town act more foolishly in disregarding the golden rule not to surrender till the last possible moment. The third parallel was not yet open, the covered way had to be crowned and the assault given. Indeed, had the French rushed matters and assaulted at once, they would, even if successful, have been caught in great confusion by Coburg, for, as they took possession of the place, the guns of the enemy told that the relieving force had arrived.³ A little more resistance, and Hatry's division must have remained in the trenches, and Jourdan would have lost the battle of Fleurus.

Whilst Hatry was besieging Charleroi the army took up the same positions as it had occupied on the 16th June, and formed a great semicircle round the town. Marceau was once more on the right by the Sambre, connecting with Lefebvre, who was in front of Campinaire, with his light troops occupying Fleurus. Championnet and Morlot carried on the line to the left wing under Kléber (Duhesme's division, and that of Montaigu). This time Jourdan entrenched himself and the troops soon made the position formidable.⁴ One would have thought that every available man would have been brought up, but here came in the old story of the failure to have one commander of all the troops on the Sambre. Schérer, with two divisions, was on the right bank, simply watching the Sambre above the army, up to Maubeuge, a thing he would have been able to do with

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 134; Soult, i. 157-8; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 247, 250-2, 257-8; Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 334 note 1.

² For the siege see Foucart-Finot, ii. 403-5; Musset-Pathay, 363-78; Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 308-11, 321-2, Carte 9 bis. For articles of capitulation see Hardy, 73.

³ Foucart-Finot, ii. 405-6.

⁴ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, Carte 10; Jomini, *Rév.*, Atlas XI; Alison, Atlas X.

better effect had he crossed with the army. Jourdan was not authorized to give him orders, so he only asked Ferrand¹ to send him what troops he could. Daurier's brigade, 6,000 strong, instead of the 15,000 of the two divisions,² was sent over and took its place on the left by the Sambre on the heights of Landelies, its advanced troops occupying Fontaine-l'Évêque.³

Coburg had adopted the plan proposed by the Prince of Orange, to throw his weight on Jourdan, relieve Charleroi, and send the French once more over the Sambre. First he had to get the Duke of York to undertake to defend Tournai and the Scheldt during his absence. Calvert, who was with the Duke and should have known, says that the Duke offered to make part of the expedition,⁴ and Coburg did offer him the alternative of accompanying him, but, according to Dupuis, the Duke objected altogether to the expedition, and threatened, if it were carried out, to retire in order to defend Holland, no doubt in accordance with the English view on the importance of securing West Flanders.⁵ Coburg, however, who had already started, induced the Duke to undertake the task of guarding the Scheldt, and his detachment of 12,000 men reached Nivelles on the 24th June. Altogether Coburg now had 52,000 men and, assuming that Charleroi could hold out for some days, he proposed to attack Jourdan on the 26th June. On the 25th he made an attempt to communicate his arrival to the garrison, and a detachment was sent on to the heights of Heppignies to fire rockets there, but Championnet, suspecting their errand, drove these troops off, and they had to send up their signal so far off that it was not seen by the garrison. The commandant of Charleroi had been ordered to fire guns at certain hours to communicate his state, but it had been forgotten that the cannonade of the besiegers would interfere with this proceeding, just as in the story of the naval order that the signal to cease firing during a certain engagement would be three guns.⁶

On the 26th June 1794 came the important battle of Fleurus. Jourdan, allowing for the troops he sent into Charleroi, had 75,000 men⁷ in entrenched positions, and Coburg had to attack with 52,000 men. The Allies advanced at or before daybreak in five columns, the Archduke Charles, who commanded the

¹ Is this a mistake for Schérer? ² Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 279. ³ Ibid., 323-4.
⁴ Calvert, 258-9. ⁵ Ibid., 252-3. ⁶ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 314-21. ⁷ Ibid., 323.

fourth column, being ordered to take command of the fifth also, that is, to guide the two bodies on the left as soon as they got near enough to one another. Coburg seems to have had no reserve and not to have attempted to guide any part of his force after it was once engaged, whilst Jourdan used as reserve Hatry's division, withdrawn from the siege of Charleroi and placed with Dubois' cavalry by Ransart, at about the centre of the salient of the position. This reserve was employed with advantage. It is interesting to compare the plans of the battle of Fleurus, fought in 1794, with that of Ligny, fought so near it in 1815;¹ Jourdan in 1794 and Napoleon in 1815 are said to have used the same windmill for reconnoitring.²

The battle of Fleurus began at 3 a.m. on the 26th June 1794 and lasted till seven at night. Coburg's five columns were to make concentric attacks on the semicircle held by Jourdan, so that Jomini declares the situation resembled that at Leipzig, except that in 1813 the columns were each strong enough to stand without support.³ Amongst the leaders of these columns of Fleurus were men to be known as opponents of Bonaparte: the Archduke Charles, who was to take his revenge on Jourdan in 1796; Beaulieu, who had the honour of being the first General defeated by Bonaparte in his great Italian campaigns; Quasdanowich, who was beaten with one column at Lonato in 1796 and with another at Rivoli in 1797, besides the Chief of the Staff, Alvinzi, the commander baffled at Arcola and crushed at Rivoli.

Except for the final result, the battle much resembled that of the 16th June. Once more Kléber more than held his own on the left, though Montaignu's division, drawn up, one does not understand why, in front of Courcelles at right angles to the Piéton, was driven back to the Sambre at Marchienne-au-Pont and even over to the right bank of the river, the enemy being halted here by Daurier's brigade, detached by Schérer. Meantime Kléber held the line of the Piéton with Duhesme's division: Duhesme was on the right or north, Kléber himself on the left, and Colonel Bernadotte in the centre at Roux. In the afternoon at about 2 p.m. Kléber ordered an advance across the Piéton and, seeing, as he says, in the plain 'Bernadotte attacking by the right with

¹ See Thiers, *Rév.*, Atlas XV, and *ibid.*, *Empire*, lxxv, and Alison, Atlas X and CIV.

² Petiet, 194; Thiers, *Empire*, xx. 79. (Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, 20 vols., Paris, Lheureux, 1862.)

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 138 note.

his zeal and habitual valour',¹ he himself pushed on also. Bernadotte described his men as charging the enemy's guns, which vomited floods of case on them, and in the end, though not till late, the enemy here withdrew, their extreme right being pressed back by Daurier's brigade, supported by Poncet's brigade of Montaigu's division.

It was, however, on the right that Jourdan felt the battle must be decided, and here Beaulieu swept Marceau's shaky battalions for the fifth time back across the Sambre, the men simply flying in complete disorder and leaving the unfortunate Marceau alone with his staff and some orderlies. Lefebvre had reinforced Marceau, and now he sent his Chief of the Staff, Colonel Soult, to ascertain the state of affairs on the extreme right. Soult found Marceau just about to be surrounded by the enemy, whom he was defying: always apt to be hysterical, he was seeking death to efface the disgrace of his division. Soult, although no older (they were both 25), was a cooler man. 'You want to die,' he said, 'and your soldiers are dishonouring themselves; go and seek them, and return to conquer with them, meantime we will guard your position on the right of Lambusart.' 'Yes,' said Marceau, 'that's the path of honour. I hasten there, and before long I shall be alongside of you.' He did succeed in rallying part of his wing and got up in time to share the final victory, although it is hard to understand Lecourbe, who led a brigade under him, when he says, 'Notre division a fait son devoir et se tait'. Silence would certainly seem to have been best for the division.²

The situation now was most serious, especially for Jourdan, who knew that Saint-Just, glooming in rear, would demand his head if the army retreated once more. Lefebvre, exposed on his right by the flight of Marceau's 'Ardenne's', drew back his advanced troops from Fleurus, forcing Championnet on his left to do the same from Saint-Fiacre. On the extreme right the enemy had got up to the Sambre and had even passed that river, making for Charleroi, whilst on the extreme left they were close to the town, whose guns, opening on them, warned Jourdan of the danger there.³

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 340, 579.

² Soult, i. 161-2; Maze, 146-7; Philebert, 92-3; Parfait, 191-5.

³ Pingaud, 77; Soult, i. 164.

The battle depended on the firmness of the centre and right, and the leading of the Commander-in-Chief. The Archduke Charles, supported by Beaulieu and disembarrassed from Marceau, fell on the position of the *avant-garde*. To guard his right, exposed by the flight of the right wing, Lefebvre ordered Soult to place three battalions and a Dragoon regiment *en potence*, that is, wheeled back at right angles to the line, to fill the gap between Lambusart and the wood above the river: twelve guns saved from Marceau's wreck were also used here. Sticking to his Campinaire entrenchments, Lefebvre ordered his men to let the enemy get close without firing on them: then he gave the order for a volley, when d'Hautpoul dashed out with the cavalry through an opening in his line and charged the disordered enemy. Three times the columns of the Archduke were thus repulsed, and for long Beaulieu also failed against Lambusart and the troops *en potence*. With this last part of the division Soult remained all day, having five horses killed under him. The French troops were swept by the enemy's case, while his cavalry endeavoured to seize their guns and surround the force. Twice the horsemen penetrated beyond the hedges that protected the defenders, but each time they were repulsed.

Yet Beaulieu at last made progress and established himself in Lambusart. Setting fire to the barns in the middle of the village and thus covering themselves, the French were able to hold the houses nearest their works. The camp of the division was in flames, as indeed was the very ground they fought on, for the ripe corn had caught fire from the blazing portfires, and the fields were rippling seas of flame. Jourdan had doubtless seen to the filling of the ammunition wagons, but they were exploding from minute to minute: most of the guns were dismounted, while the entrenchments were filled with corpses. Still Lefebvre stood like a rock, the temper of his men ran high and, as the Austrians pressed on them more and more heavily, they shouted, 'No retreat to-day!' Those, however, outside this burning volcano believed the division was crushed, whilst the cry of distress far in rear from Charleroi seemed to mean that the day was lost.

Meanwhile on Lefebvre's left Championnet held the crest above Heppignies and Wagnée. He was hard pressed, and Morlot's division on his left, in what we may call the salient of

the position, was drawn back by Jourdan on Gosselies. Championnet heard the guns of the enemy in rear of the two flanks, and he found a strange difficulty in communicating with Lefebvre. He knew of the flight of Marceau's troops, and believed that Lefebvre was being driven back, and that in consequence his own division might be surrounded. One of the Dragoons sent to Lefebvre met troops, probably Marceau's, and, believing them to belong to Lefebvre, returned with the report that the *avant-garde* was in full retreat. Jourdan, who had been feeding his line with some of Hatry's troops, came up and ordered the retreat, and the troops began evacuating the redoubt at Heppignies, a movement that would have caused Lefebvre to be outflanked. Suddenly a rider came tearing through the fields of rye, announcing that Lefebvre still held Lambusart. Then Jourdan ordered the division to turn and attack, whilst he threw Dubois' cavalry on the enemy. Dubois was soon repulsed, but Championnet's troops met the Austrians, who, believing themselves victorious, were taken by surprise and were beaten back. On this point the day was saved.¹

Behind Lambusart Lefebvre was indeed holding his own. He had done well under Hoche in the gorges of the Vosges at the relief of Landau in 1793, but I always imagine him more in his element in such a close fight as this, where no skill or turning movement could break men that stood to die. Watching the combat closely, when for the fourth time the columns of the enemy broke back from his front, he saw that their infantry were entangled with their own cavalry. Coburg had lost his head, and was throwing cavalry and infantry, one after the other, on the French.² Taking advantage of the confusion thus caused, Lefebvre, with what pleasure one can conceive, 'put myself at the head of the 80th regiment', to attack the enemy in the village of Lambusart, whilst the troops hitherto held *en potence* formed columns of attack and fell on the right of the village. Jourdan helped with some of Hatry's men, and Marceau dragged back some of his fugitive troops to join again in the fight. 'Fifteen hours of the most desperate fighting that I have ever seen in my life', wrote Soult, after his fighting days were done, 'had considerably weakened the physical strength of the

¹ Championnet, 60-9.

² Pingaud, 78.

troops, but their energy was still the same.¹ After a severe struggle the enemy drew off, and the division was left, gasping but victorious.

It is hard to say how the battle might have gone had Coburg fought it out to the last extremity. The Archduke Charles thought that no decision had been reached,² and Soult believed that Coburg's success on the farthest points of the two wings and his progress in the centre should have given him hopes of victory.³ Perhaps he was not fighting with his whole heart, for the Austrians were not particularly set on holding the Netherlands. He was alarmed at the heavy loss suffered by the two columns on the right, which had fought under his own eye,⁴ an instance of the bad effect of a General's paying too much personal attention to one part of the field. The loss of Charleroi also told, for both sides gave too much value to the possession of a place that should have been the prize of a battle. He might have simply drawn off for a short distance, to judge if it were possible to renew the struggle, but he recalled his columns and went right back. It reads oddly that he encamped at Braine-l'Alleud, and afterwards at Waterloo. The last part of his retreat was made in confusion, which would have had serious consequences had the French cavalry been able to pursue. The French, however, were exhausted and had little ammunition left : indeed they were anxious to make a golden bridge for the retreat of the enemy, and so worn were they that they remained next day motionless. Coburg's loss, excluding the 2,800 men of the garrison of Charleroi, was 2,286 men, a mortar, and a standard. The French loss was about the same.⁵

¹ Soult, i. 168. ² Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 374. ³ Soult, i. 173. ⁴ Pingaud, 78.

⁵ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 372. For the battle of Fleurus see Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 319-85, 578-87; Jomini, *Rév.*, v. 133-53; *Vict. et Conq.*, iii. 45-66; Thiers, *Rév.*, iii. 41-5; Soult, i. 155-73; Championnet, 58-76; Hardy, 74-82; Pingaud, 74-8.

VII

THE ADVANCE TO THE RHINE

(July 1794 to February 1795)

The results of Fleurus. Progress of Lefebvre, Bernadotte, Soult, and Ney. Sieges of Landrecies, Le Quesnoy, Valenciennes, and Condé. Battles of the Ourthe and of the Rœr.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1794 10th July. French enter Brussels.
27th July. Ninth Thermidor : end of the Terror.
4th August. San Sebastian taken by French.
17th–20th November. French victory at Figueras in Spain.
- 1795 20th January. French enter Amsterdam.
3rd February. Rosas in Spain taken by the French.

THE results of Fleurus, as we shall see, were very great, although their extent was not realized at the moment : indeed Marceau next day was asking for reinforcements in anticipation of a renewal of the attack on him,¹ and Carnot acknowledged that he and the *Comité* did not recognize the full importance of the battle till some time afterwards,² when the retreat of the enemy had shown the effect of his repulse. Calmly criticized, it was not a brilliant feat of arms. Jourdan told the *Comité* that he had had only 50,000 men, whilst he is credited with 68,000, but perhaps he deducted, with some reason, Marceau's runners.³ He had only just been able to beat off Coburg from an entrenched position, and it is doubtful whether the success might not have been turned into defeat by more determination on the part of the enemy. It is indeed extraordinary that Coburg, once having made up his mind to fall on Jourdan, did not push his attack home to the uttermost. He should have known that this was the turning-point of the campaign. Pichegru was pressing his right, and, if he crushed Jourdan, he would then have Pichegru at his mercy to jam against the sea, and the road to Paris would have been open. If, however, he could not drive Jourdan back with his centre and left, then no hope remained of resisting both French armies, and Jourdan's attack, threaten-

¹ Maze, 147.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 265.

³ *Ibid.*, 260.

ing the Austrian communications, was more dangerous to Coburg than all Pichegru's movements along the coast. Although it took long for the nation to discover it, the success was decisive of the campaign.

Still, Jourdan's personal part in the battle was distinctly creditable. It is true that there were none of those masterly or daring strokes which distinguish the born leaders of armies. Contrary to the custom of French commanders, and indeed to his own practice, he had fought a defensive battle, placing himself by a bold advance in a strong position, in which the enemy was forced to attack him. The untrustworthiness of the troops of his right wing may have had much to do with this attitude, but I imagine that, once Charleroi was in his hands, he would have advanced to attack, had time been given him, possibly with a different result. On the field he played his part well. As indifferent to the retreat of his wings over the Sambre as Napoleon was to the driving back of his left at Wagram, with the enemy almost closing round him in rear, paying no attention to the distress guns of Charleroi, he clung to the key of his position, knowing that defeat there meant ruin to the half-surrounded army; and he was rewarded by victory. In the critical moments he had shown insight, and each attack that the enemy pushed home found him ready to reinforce the weak point. Now, as on the 16th June, the old infantry private had made good use of his cavalry, as he tried to do at Stockach in 1799. In his knack of finding himself at the threatened points he was a striking contrast to Pichegru. Calm, possessing considerable determination, and very ready to expose himself when necessary, he had proved himself a good commander for the period. The fine resistance of the mass of his troops and the behaviour of the Generals showed that the time of disorganization was passing away, and that a real army was developing out of the mobs of the Revolution.

Coburg was not the only foe he had beaten: what was more important was that Jourdan had defeated the Representatives with his army. The victory had been won in complete defiance of their advice and authority, Generals marked down for the guillotine were, thanks to him, leading their men in the field, and we may be sure that there was not an officer or man amongst those reasoning bayonets but knew that, if Saint-

Just's or Carnot's orders for the detachment to the 'Nord' had been obeyed, the army would have been, not defeated, but destroyed. No Carnot, also, had been on the field to take the credit of success as at Wattignies ; and Saint-Just had soon to go back to Paris to defend his head, which fell with that of Robespierre at Thermidor, the 27th July 1794. Much of the success of the rest of the campaign came from Jourdan's independent attitude towards the Representatives and the authorities at Paris.

There is, I acknowledge, rather a fine medieval flavour about the whole campaign of Fleurus. Each side gave the enemy ample warning and time for the next move, and Coburg's long preparation resembled that of Monseigneur d'Antrèche, when in 1249 he solemnly and slowly armed himself in his tent before sallying out to the Saracens, who quietly awaited his leisure to kill him.¹ Yet one feels a certain pleasure in Jourdan's success. He had been badly treated before and was to fare yet worse in the future. Now he became the hero of the moment ; other armies were stripped to reinforce him ; he was known as the conqueror of Fleurus, a title which seems so strangely omitted from the list of Napoleon's Duchies ; and in his most evil time he must have looked back to this bloody day as the brightest of his not inglorious life.

Kléber, apparently from the reputation he had brought from La Vendée, had been given the position of wing commander, and certainly he had justified the choice. At both of the battles his wing had beaten off the enemy comparatively early in the day, and, if on the 16th the right had been as able to hold its own as on the 26th, he would have been used by Jourdan to wheel round on the enemy's centre and left, dealing them a deadly blow. His conduct on the 24th May in swinging round and marching on the guns heard in his rear saved the Charleroi force from a great disaster, one indeed which might have been irremediable, for, had he gone on, the troops in his rear would easily have been driven across the Sambre and his large detachment would have been lost. His instructions to his Generals for this day are cited by Duhesme, because 'he was the first General in this war to feel the need for instructing his comrades, and this important document forms a monument in a time which one

¹ Joinville's *Saint-Louis* (Sampson Low, 1868), 41.

may call that of our military infancy'.¹ This was a good beginning for his long and fine connexion with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', to which he did so much good by his talents, and in the end so much harm by his temper.

It speaks well for the standing of Marceau in the army that the flight of his wing seems to have made no difference in his position. One would have thought that Saint-Just might have marked him for slaughter, but perhaps everything was forgotten in the joy of being at last victorious. Excitable and hysterical as he was, he seems always to have been a general favourite, and his own bravery made the flight of his men forgotten. Still his report is curious reading with its ending, 'I send the horses of three prisoners'.² As I have said, even on the 27th June he seemed so little conscious of victory that he was wishing to have the right reinforced. Two horses had been shot under him, and the last in falling injured his left thigh so much that, though he fought to the end of the battle, he had to go back to Givet to be treated, Lorge replacing him till he returned on the 16th July.³

Amongst the Generals of Division Lefebvre had won most credit. It is true that Lecourbe, whose brigade had formed part of Marceau's runners, wrote that, when his men had been repulsed, and he himself wounded, they had 'drawn back on the division of Lefebvre, which has had almost all the honours of this day, without, however, other merit than that of holding behind a line of almost unattackable entrenchments'.⁴ Lecourbe had been but a short time with his troops and was not responsible for their behaviour, but his sneer at the tenacity of Lefebvre, which had saved him, is most unworthy of him. Not only Soult's, but all descriptions agree in the rout of Marceau's wing, and that Lefebvre had held his ground under the most discouraging circumstances. As for the entrenchments, the part of the division *en potence*, exposed by the failure of the right, had no artificial cover. Lecourbe's historian, going farther than that General, represents Lefebvre's men as remaining with their arms at the shoulder,⁵ whilst the *émigré* Langeron, who was on the wrong side of the works, describes them as having been 'valiantly defended', and, as I have already said, ascribes

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 170.

² Maze, 145-7.

³ Parfait, 193-5.

⁴ Philebert, 93.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

Coburg's retreat to the heavy loss of the columns that had attacked Lefebvre.¹ Soult, writing under the Restoration, says, 'Amongst those whose indomitable attitude contributed the most to the success of the day I like to cite General Lefebvre'.²

I have spoken of the pleasure with which Lefebvre must have put himself at the head of a regiment for a charge, for the rough old General seems always to have had a schoolboy's delight in a hand-to-hand tussle, and years afterwards, when he was a Marshal and ought to have been well to the rear of the fighting line, we shall find him horrifying his staff by leading on a regiment in one of the few fights in the open he could get at the siege of Dantzic.

Lefebvre, as the fine gentlemen of the Empire and the Restoration were fond of pointing out, was not a man to meet in a drawing-room: certainly he was not a pleasant opponent in the field, but he was no brutal fighter. Amongst the prisoners he had taken were some Frenchmen, serving in French regiments with the Austrians, who by law should have been put to death. Had these men fallen into the hands of Moreau or of Vandamme, shot they certainly would have been, and mercy was dangerous. Lefebvre, however, was governed by another and a higher law than that of the vile babblers of Paris, whom five years later he was to assist in driving from power. During the night the prisoners, aided in their escape, disappeared, some of them to return and serve the country for which Lefebvre fought: nor was this a solitary instance of his humaneness.³ Clemency in such matters was still dangerous. In the articles for the capitulation of Charleroi, signed by Jourdan but doubtless drawn up by the Representatives, it is stated, 'The *émigrés* and deserters shall be assembled to be punished as traitors to the country'.⁴

Bernadotte, although only a Colonel, had been acting as a General of Brigade, and a leading one. On the 24th May Duhesme mentions him 'with the brave 71st', as opening a way for the retreating division through the enemy's infantry.⁵ In the same way on the 3rd June Marceau, under whom he then served, describes him as arresting the enemy at Fontaine-

¹ Pingaud, 77-8.

² Soult, i. 172.

³ Ibid., 170-1.

⁴ Hardy, 73.

⁵ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 180.

l'Évêque.¹ At the first battle of Fleurus on the 16th June it was with a regiment under Bernadotte that Duhesme took the village of Trazegnies,² and, at the final battle of the 26th June, Kléber remarked him fighting 'with his usual zeal and valour', Bernadotte himself describes how he took the Courcelles wood,³ and praise from Kléber was something to be proud of. It is said that already in April this year he had refused the rank of General of Division, as he had not yet been promoted General of Brigade, and he did not wish for that rank until more discipline and subordination had been established in the army, a most sensible resolution. Now Kléber said to him, 'You must accept the rank of General of Brigade here on the field of battle, where you have so well deserved it. If I still meet with a refusal, it is because you are no longer my friend.'⁴ One rather imagines that there is more of Bernadotte than of Kléber in these words, for the future Prince, however modest in 1794, thought highly of all his actions in later years, but undoubtedly he was promoted General of Brigade on the day of the battle of the 26th June 1794, and we may be sure he deserved the promotion. As for Soult, he says that his own conduct on the right of Lefebvre's division, where, as I have said,⁵ he had five horses killed under him (a slaughter of chargers like that of Ney's mounts at Waterloo), had been remarked. He had, however, only been promoted Colonel on the preceding 14th May, and so he got no further reward at present. Lt.-Colonel Adjutant-General Mortier, who, I presume, served in Kléber's wing, is said to have distinguished himself this day,⁶ but was not promoted. Captain Ney, whose Hussar regiment was also under Kléber, is not mentioned.

The 'Entreprenant', the celebrated balloon employed by the French at Fleurus and the first that ever floated over a battlefield, had been made by Guyton and Coutelle at Meudon, where the Revolution had turned the *château* into an artillery park, a powder magazine, and a workshop. It was controlled by André-Jacques Garnerin, the inventor of parachutes, who had formed a company of balloonists at Meudon, and it was used as a captive balloon held by ropes. Jourdan did not receive it

¹ Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 208; Maze, 143, reading Bernadotte for Bernadeau.

² Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 296.

³ Ibid., 340-1, 578-9.

⁴ *Fastes*, i. 358.

⁵ Soult, i. 172.

⁶ *Fastes*, i. 407.

with favour, and both Kléber and Championnet reported against it. Indeed the two officers in the car, General Morlot and an engineer, were either too high or too inexperienced to distinguish details, and the bulletins they slid down the rope contained little information and some of that wrong. Jourdan, writing five years later with rather a bitter remembrance of the balloon, for part of the victory had been attributed to it, said the only essential service it rendered was to astonish the enemy on its first appearance. Langeron, who was in the enemy's ranks, thought it had been useful to the French, enabling them to change their dispositions according to what they observed from on high, and he wondered why they had renounced its use.¹ The Austrians fired on it without effect. The best judge, Jourdan, wrote that he had carefully kept the pencil note written by Morlot, informing him that his right wing was successful, when really it had been driven across the river.² It was on the earth, not in the sky, that Fleurus was won. Still the balloon accompanied the army until in 1796 it was lost at Würzburg in the retreat, and it is now in the arsenal at Vienna.³

As I have mentioned Garnerin, let me say that it was but natural that the French should be the first to experiment with balloons on the field. One of the Montgolfiers, probably Joseph, had proposed in 1793 to destroy the revolted city of Toulon by throwing into it from a balloon two enormous shells full of combustibles and weighing thirty milliers, that is, 30,000 livres.⁴ Garnerin himself fell later into the hands of the Austrians and, instead of flying aloft, remained imprisoned in the citadel of Baden until December 1795, when he returned to France and tried his parachute. In 1798 he began a series of aerial voyages. A true Frenchman, he arranged to be accompanied by a 'jeune personne', to the great scandal of the bashful Police, who for some time prevented the modesty of the sex being thus outraged. When Garnerin triumphed over their resistance, his first voyage with his fair companion ended in a truly French fashion,

¹ Pingaud, 77 note 1.

² Dupuis, *Fleurus*, 377-80; Championnet, 74-6; Soult, i. 171-2; Coutanceau, *Nord*, I^e Partie, ii. 471-554; Foucart-Finot, ii. 407; *Carnot, par son fils*, i. 363-5; Bonnal, *Carnot*, 272-3.

³ Murray, *Handbook, South Germany*, i. 174.

⁴ Chépy, 367.

'The travellers experienced no other accident except that of being arrested as "suspect" by a municipal agent, who considered it wrong to journey through the air without passports in full and proper form'.¹ There was some doubt as to how any passengers captured in a balloon by the enemy should be treated; Coutelle, who had his anxieties on the point, consulted the Austrians (during an armistice) about the fate he would have met, if he had fallen into their hands. 'We should have treated you, Monsieur, as you deserved, as a man coming from Heaven,' was the civil reply.²

The English probably never dreamt of receiving a foe by the air, and when Jarvis remarked that he had never said the French would not come, but only that they would not come by sea, he probably thought the matter settled, but in 1808 Napoleon was referring to the scientific Monge L'Homond's proposal to invade England by means of a hundred balloons of 100 metres, say 328 feet, in diameter, the car of each to hold a thousand men with food for a fortnight, two guns with their wagons, twenty-five horses, and sufficient wood to keep up the fires; for all these balloons were to be on the Montgolfier, or hot-air system.³

The army, which on the 27th June was officially given the title of Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse,⁴ now acted in combination with the 'Nord'. Coburg had spread out his forces, the left, under Beaulieu, between Gembloux and Sombref, the centre between Genappe and Nivelles, and the right, under the Prince of Orange, at Rœulx, covering Mons. Meanwhile the Duke of York had retired to Renaix, covering Audenarde and the Escaut. According to Soult and to all common sense, Jourdan should now have marched down the Meuse on Liège, while Pichegru got abreast of him by Audenarde, Brussels, and Louvain.⁵ This was what the commanders meant to do, but the *Comité* and the organizer of Victory thought otherwise, and, whilst Pichegru was turned northwards on Ostend, Jourdan was directed to extend his left and to attack the Prince of Orange at Mons; in other words he was to strike north-west, instead of in the true direction, north-east.

Leaving his centre and right to demonstrate against Beaulieu,

¹ Pellet, ii. 217-22.

² Carnot, *par son fils*, i. 364-5.

³ *Corr. Nap.*, xviii, No. 14422.

⁴ Wouters, 83. See p. 150 note 3. Dupuis gives the date as the 13th June.

⁵ Soult, 173-9; Pingaud, 78.

Jourdan, in compliance with his orders, moved practically backwards to his flank with his left wing, now some 47,500 men. Mons was occupied, and then Jourdan, returning to his own plans, began swinging round his left in the arc of a circle that would pass through Brussels, Louvain, Tirlemont, and Maestricht, to make a junction with the 'Nord'. Schérer with 30,000 men was left in rear to carry out the sieges of the fortresses captured by the Allies—Condé, Valenciennes, Le Quesnoy, and Landrecies.¹

At this moment came Ney's second chance in life. His appointment as A.D.C. to General Lamarche in the 'Nord', promising much, had ended in nothing, and he was back with his Hussar regiment, a simple Captain. The success of the new army in which he served had brought him no promotion, but that depended on election, in which the wishes of each rank played their part. Ney had made himself unpopular by what is called by his friends strictness on duty. Knowing his character, we may believe that his natural roughness of speech and procedure had something to do with this. In any case he had seen himself passed over for Lt.-Colonel by an old Captain whom he considered useless. Like many young officers with a grievance, he believed that he was so much injured that he must leave the service. Fortunately for him, while in this mood, he was commanding the parties furnished by the cavalry as escort to Kléber, and on the 7th July at Braine-le-Comte he poured forth his grievances to a former friend, Lieutenant Pajol, who had just joined as A.D.C. to Kléber, and who was to be a brilliant light cavalry leader of the Empire and to win the bridge of Montereau in 1814. Pajol sympathized, and repeated Ney's tale to Kléber. Next day, whilst marching from Braine-le-Comte to Ath, Kléber called up the young Captain, talked much to him, and was pleased with his conversation and with the fact that he could speak German, for he, Ney, and Pajol all came from the frontier provinces. That evening Kléber told his A.D.C. that he wished to take Ney as temporary Adjutant-General until at the first affair he could get the appointment made permanent by the Representative, Gillet. Pajol went off with the news to Ney, who at first wished to decline, perhaps

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 104-7; *Pajol*, i. 83-6; Soult, i. 176-9; Foucart-Finot, ii. 411-13.

disliking to leave his regiment, but at last accepted and so made his first real step to the Marshalate.¹

Fighting over the battlefields of Ligny and Quatre Bras (so that one night Lefebvre and Soult halted at Waterloo), the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' drove back the Allies and wheeled to its right until it faced nearly east, with its right on the Sambre by Namur and at Genappe, and its left resting on Brussels, where it linked with the 'Nord'. Clairfayt's Austrian corps had sidled across the French front from the extreme right of the Allies and had joined Coburg, thus massing the Austrian contingent, with whom Jourdan had now to deal, while the Prince of Orange and his Dutch troops retired through Brussels and with the Duke of York faced the 'Nord'. After several times changing his mind, Clairfayt abandoned Namur and, when reproached with this, 'Ah!' said he, showing the place where part of his arm had been carried away at the siege of Thionville, and how his body was covered with ulcers, 'I am only the shadow of a man'.² Troops of both the 'Nord' and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' reached Brussels on the 11th July, but Ney had already entered the day before and had received the keys of the town: the rapidity that had helped to win this prize for Kléber and Jourdan doubtless did him good service with both.³ He was to see a very different summer's work in this country in 1815.

Jourdan's advance had been made against the instructions of Carnot, who on the 4th July had directed him to move the mass of his forces on Namur, and then to fortify a position in which he was to wait until Pichegru came to attack the enemy in rear. This delicious plan for letting Coburg get well in between the two French armies had found Jourdan on the march and no longer very submissive to the *Comité*. On the 7th July he replied that the letter had reached him on the evening of the 4th July, on the field of battle, that he had seen by Carnot's views that he ought to remain in his position and send a corps to Ath, but, not having received any order from Pichegru, and suffering from seeing his army inactive, he feared he might be reproached for not having profited by his advantages, and had believed he did well in attacking.⁴

¹ *Pajol*, i. 85-6.

² Pingaud, 82 note.

³ *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 107; *Pajol*, i. 86-7; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 262.

⁴ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 259.

Jourdan does not seem so far to have received any orders from Pichegru, a commander who, at this period at all events, was very careless about any troops not under his own eye. Having ignored the Charleroi force when it had no real head, he was the less likely to attend to it when it had grown into a separate army, nor had Jourdan stung him into activity, as Hoche had tried to do before Landau. Jourdan, who was a month senior to him as a General of Division, and who had won Wattignies in command of the 'Nord', when Pichegru was practically unknown, was strangely deferential towards him, asking for orders from him on the 9th July.¹ Although it had been Jourdan's troops that had first occupied Brussels, he had not taken his fair share of success by going to that city, leaving it to Pichegru, who hastened there, as he had preceded Hoche in Landau in the previous year, and, even when requested by Pichegru to join him, Jourdan had preferred to remain with his troops in the presence of the enemy. At the request of the Representatives the two commanders had met at Hal, where Pichegru told him to remain in his position and to besiege Landrecies and Le Quesnoy. The Representative Gillet, indeed, remarked on the reserve and prudence with which Jourdan was acting, and his attitude was perhaps due to fear of Carnot's revenge for his breach of instructions. For a few days Jourdan was ill, to the alarm of the *Comité*, and, remaining for a time in camp, he nominated Kléber as the proper General to take his place temporarily, but his indisposition soon passed off.²

Jourdan knew the necessity for walking warily. The Prince of Orange wrote to him for news of the Prince of Hesse-Philipstadt, who really had been killed on the 6th July near Waterloo, signing the letter 'your very humble servant'. 'I do not believe', wrote Jourdan to the *Comité*, 'that he is with consideration my very humble servant, but I think I ought not to answer him, and that the unfortunate facility with which our enemies get our public papers will sufficiently inform him of the fate of the Prince of Hesse-Philipstadt'.³ This, remarks Wallon, was not perhaps polite, but it was prudent. Prudent, indeed, was the word, for Jourdan, who had belonged to the 'Nord', must have known that on the arrest of the unfortunate Houchard the Representatives were horrified to find amongst his papers

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 264.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 262-5.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. 265.

letters in which German Princes expressed their consideration for him in the usual formulas of unmeaning politeness.¹ Two years later, when Marceau died, a better feeling existed in the French armies, who, freed from the yoke of the Representatives, were ready to accept the chivalrous courtesy of their enemy.

The two great armies, 'Nord' and 'Sambre-et-Meuse', having thus met and formed a fine mass to throw at the enemy, the first thing the *Comité* did was to separate them. Carnot still thought most of a maritime expedition, and he and the *Comité* did not wish for any general continued advance until the fortresses in rear still held by the Allies had been recaptured. On the 13th July Pichegru moved on Antwerp, and Jourdan advanced and cleared the country to the Meuse after a good many separate affairs. On the 27th July Kléber with the left took Tongres, and Hatry took Liége, when the army drew up on a long line with its right on the Meuse at Namur and Huy, and its left at Tongres. At the end of August, after the capture of the fortresses in rear, Jourdan drew the left nearer to Maestricht to be ready for a fresh advance. The right was then at Huy, whence the line ran down the Meuse by Liége as before. The left wing had been reorganized in four divisions, one of which, the *avant-garde*, was under General of Brigade Bernadotte.² The Austrians faced Jourdan on the right bank of the Meuse, their left opposite Liége, their centre holding Maestricht, and their right at Roermond. Coburg was succeeded in command by Clairfayt.

It was as a good leader of advanced-guards that Kléber had taken Ney on his staff, for the work was constantly done by the Adjutant-Generals. To push on ahead with a force of cavalry, sometimes joined by infantry, knowing that behind you toiled the long columns of a division, was just the work for Ney. Active, hardy, impetuous, daring in the presence of the enemy, he would charge home with a handful of men as gaily as Henri IV himself. I presume that it was in one of the separate affairs to which I have just referred that he won a permanent place on the staff. During the advance on Palenberg (or Pellenberg) a part of the cavalry had been beaten off by the enemy, but

¹ Phipps, 244.

² The other divisional commanders were Duhesme, Friant, and Richard. Pajol, *Kléber*, 112.

Ney threw himself on the Austrians with some Dragoons and overwhelmed them. Kléber, who was an eyewitness, was delighted and in his report said, 'Captain Ney, doing the work of Adjutant-General, performed prodigies of valour. With thirty Dragoons of the 7th and some Chasseur orderlies, he charged 200 Hussars of Blankenstein and threw them into the greatest disorder.' This brought Ney a letter from Gillet, dated the 1st August 1794, giving him the rank of Lt.-Colonel Adjutant-General, on account of his military talent and patriotism.¹

From this time Ney distinguished himself by daring and brilliant, but not foolhardy, excursions at the head of small bodies of cavalry. Starting from Diest on the 26th July and striking north-east, he got that day to Peer, some twenty miles off, and capturing a convoy of 23 carriages, sent it back to the French lines. Unfortunately he did not know that one of his men had deserted and had informed the enemy of his movements, so that, while Ney was pushing his raid, his former opponents, the Blankenstein Hussars, with the Latour Dragoons, re-captured the convoy and then surrounded him. Finally he cut his way back through them, bringing with him the Baron von Hompesch, the commander of the last body that had tried to stop him. Jourdan was delighted with Ney's conduct, as well as with the capture of von Hompesch: he believed the Baron had been concerned in former years in intrigues with some of the French Generals, and asked to have him sent to Paris. The Representative Gillet is said now to have made Ney Colonel. If so, the promotion was not officially confirmed until December: in the meantime Gillet 'proposed for his part to employ him with much advantage',² and Ney was in many such affairs, always returning with prisoners, booty, and glory.³

Meanwhile the sieges of the fortresses in rear were being carried out by Hatry, detached with 30,000 men: Landrecies fell on the 15th July, Le Quesnoy on the 15th August, Valenciennes on the 20th August, and Condé on the 30th August. These sieges are worth some reference, as it is always advisable to dispel the legend that the barbarities of the *Comité* had any good effect either on their own troops or on those of the enemy.

¹ Ney, i. 45-6; *Fastes*, i. 426.
Ney, i. 47-9.

³ *Pajol*, i. 93.

The Convention, while declaring on the 4th of July that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had deserved well of the country, also made an infamous decree that the garrisons of those fortresses that did not surrender at discretion within twenty-four hours after the summons should be 'passed by the edge of the sword'.¹ The civilians meant this decree most seriously, and Carnot, the mild organizer of victory, had already given orders to include in the destruction, not only the garrisons, but also any of the inhabitants that were fit to carry arms. These inhabitants, be it remembered, were French.² It is important to note that none of the Generals believed that the decree would make the garrisons lay down their arms more quickly than in the ordinary course. Le Quesnoy and Valenciennes would have been sooner in the hands of the French had Schérer been free to act on his own responsibility. No doubt the fortresses did surrender quickly, but this was due to their state: in the first place they had not been victualled until the English objected to their abandonment, when they were well supplied, but not with troops, and in the second place Coburg had ordered the garrisons to defend themselves to extremity only if a free exit were not granted.³

Ingenious means were found by the Generals to circumvent the intentions of the Paris butchers. At Le Quesnoy the governor, Planck, made the noble reply: 'One nation has not the right to decree the dishonour of another. Whatever may be the successes of the French armies, my intention is to defend my post in a manner which will merit the esteem of him who has confided it to me, and even that of the French nation.' He was right as far as the French army was concerned, and, when he was ready to negotiate, Schérer accepted the curious argument that, as the garrison had not had the decree communicated to them by the governor, they could not come under its terms. Even then reference had to be made to the Convention, and it was only the fact that the garrison could have held out much longer that caused them to be spared.

At Valenciennes Schérer tried to avoid extremities by not

¹ Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 261; Foucart-Finot, ii. 536.

² Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 256, 270. This has been represented as a mere threat in *Carnot, par son fils*, i. 490-3; Bonnal, *Carnot*, 245-6.

³ Foucart-Finot, ii. 534, 537, 557, 569; Pingaud, 79, 94-6; Wallon, *Rep.*, iv. 263.

summoning the place at first, and by waiting till the siege was well advanced. The Representative Duquesnoy seems to have concurred in this policy, but here again reference was made to the Convention, which, ordering the summons to be made, softened the terms by granting honours of war. Schérer showed his belief that the decree was no mere threat, for, when the garrison offered a capitulation that he considered he could present to the Convention, he refused to grant a truce until a reply was received from Paris, because disobedience to the letter of his orders to attack 'à outrance' would cost him too dear.¹ The garrison of Valenciennes, still able to hold out for some time, and also that of Condé, were both granted terms, laying down their arms, and being escorted to the frontier, not to serve again until exchanged.

The Chappe telegraph, or line of semaphores, which was eventually used by the Comte de Monte-Cristo for private purposes, had just been completed, and the first message it bore to Paris was the news of the surrender of Le Quesnoy, which reached the astonished Capital in an hour.² When the news of the surrender of Condé, often erroneously said to have been the first telegraphic message, reached the Convention, the babyish decree was telegraphed back by which the name of the town was changed to 'Nord-Libre'.³ During these sieges the heads of Robespierre, Saint-Just, and of their colleagues had fallen in Paris in July, and Jourdan, Hatry, Soult, and many threatened Generals must have been thankful for the destruction of the worst, bloodiest, and meanest tyranny ever exercised in France.

The fortresses thus gained, the besieging force rejoined the active armies, Schérer reinforcing Jourdan with 24 battalions and 10 squadrons. The long halt, blamed by Jomini, who did not know that the Generals had no liberty in the matter, had been made good use of; the officers had been weeded, this time not according to their patriotic feelings but their talents, while the staff had been so well employed that Soult says that it was in this period of his career that he worked hardest and found his superiors the most exacting,⁴ the tendency of good superiors,

¹ 'Comme il en coûtoit trop chez eux pour ne pas obéir à la lettre, ayant un ordre précis d'attaquer à outrance, on eut à se défendre de même.' Foucart-Finot, ii. 558.

² Foucart-Finot, ii.

³ Carnot, *par son fils*, i. 493.

⁴ Soult, i. 199.

indeed, lying in that direction. The men had suffered much, and skin disease, which played a large part in all these early campaigns, had to be specially dealt with.¹ The *embrigadement*, or amalgamation of the volunteers with the regulars, had been pushed on, the numerous small bodies being welded into fewer *demi-brigades* or regiments. Perhaps the highest praise of this measure is given by saying that the army of the Revolution, instead of being composed of a number of incongruous units, now possessed regiments and resembled in organization the armies of other military nations. In consequence, when the army did move, it presented an appearance not yet seen in this war. 'Then', says Jomini, referring to the morning of the battle of the Roer, 'the Republicans offered the spectacle of an army of one hundred thousand men, manœuvring with as much order as precision, and ready to charge the enemy.'²

Either by luck or by good management Jourdan usually was successful in his dealings with those very ticklish people to handle, the Representatives with the army. We have seen how during the early part of the campaign he had withstood the sanguinary and powerful Saint-Just, refusing to obey his orders to shoot some of the best officers of the army: indeed there is so much which is honourable in what Jourdan did not do at this period, that ordinary criticism of him must seem unjust to any one who realizes the great difficulties he had to contend with. Now better times had come, and Gillet, who seems to have been a sensible and zealous man, got rid of Müller, a General of Division, and of several Generals of Brigade, considered inefficient by Jourdan or by Kléber, without the possibility of the changes being ascribed to the patriotic sentiments of the sufferers. One of these disgraces brought to the front a name to be well known later in the corps of Davout, when on the 3rd August 1794 Gillet made Friant a General of Brigade. 'You will be under the orders of Kléber; you will be happy and charmed to know that brave Republican. Learn to appreciate the might of his genius. You will replace General Chevalier, whom I have dismissed for his want of zeal.'³ When a single accusation of treason might ruin a General, or the ill-will of any

¹ It will be remembered that Bonaparte, after Toulon, suffered for long from this cause, as did his brother Louis.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 36.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 109.

officer lead to a malicious slander, sure to be eagerly received, a Representative, either of his own initiative, or influenced by a tactful commander, could do much that might have cost that commander his life if he himself had essayed it. The situation was not yet satisfactory, but it was fast becoming more so, and each victory made the power of the Generals greater.

Schérer arrived at Namur on the 11th September 1794 with his troops in excellent state, and on the 13th Jourdan met him at Huy to place him in command of the right wing, and to superintend the attack that body was to make. Except that Hacquin had now a division, the army remained organized much as before, but Jourdan's weapon had improved, and so did his handling of it. The Meuse runs down to Liège nearly from west to east and then turns northwards. At Liège it is joined by the Ourthe river, running from south to north, and about ten miles above Liège the Ourthe itself is joined by the Amblève river from the east.¹ Clairfayt's left, under Latour, was placed at Sprimont, south of Liège and east of the junction of the Ourthe and the Amblève, and it was there that Jourdan intended to strike. The point was well chosen, for the country, hilly and wooded, was better suited to the French infantry than to the slow, solid Austrians. The enemy's position was, however, strong. 'The Ourthe runs in a rocky bed in which it is deeply cut. Its banks are either very high hills or immense precipitous rocks, which only leave very narrow passages between them and precipices in which it is difficult to engage without exposing yourself to enormous loss.' 'Ten thousand men', says Langeron, one of the defenders, 'ought to stop a body four times stronger.'²

The army, some 160,000 strong, was specially organized for the advance. Kléber was given command not only of his own left wing, in which General Bernadotte, Lt.-Colonel Ney, and, I think, Lt.-Colonel Mortier served, but also of the divisions of Lefebvre (whose Chief of the Staff was Soult), Morlot, and Championnet, altogether some 100,000 men. The rest of the army consisted of Mayer's, Hacquin's, Marceau's, and part of Hatry's divisions: it numbered nearly 60,000 men, and was commanded by Schérer. Superintended by Jourdan, this force crossed the Meuse at Huy and Namur, and on the 14th September 1794 forced the passages of the Ourthe at Comblain-au-

¹ Vogel, xvii.

² Pingaud, 91.

Pont, just above the junction of the Amblève. Jourdan himself now carefully reconnoitred the positions of the enemy at Sprimont and at Esneux on the Ourthe, and gave each General directions for his movements. Then, returning to the left bank of the Ourthe, he placed Bonnet (detached from Hatry with a body of troops) ready to cross in rear of the Austrian right. On the 17th September Kléber made his demonstration against Maestricht, into which Bernadotte drove the enemy's outposts, whilst Ney some way down the river, with a strong body of cavalry, reached the walls of Maeseyck. All this was done with such a will that Clairfayt was completely deceived and, thinking nothing of Sprimont, reinforced his right wing at and below Maestricht, as Jourdan had hoped.¹

Clairfayt's attention having been thus called off, Schérer attacked the positions of the enemy at Aywaille on the 18th September. Bonnet soon crossed below him at Esneux, and the enemy was driven from Sprimont. This was a fine piece of work, and Langeron, an *émigré*, who fought in the ranks of the Allies until 1814, and who was a spectator, bursts into high praise: 'In this action the French showed more audacity and energy than in any other battle. It can be compared only to the three combats of the great Condé at Freiburg. They forced the narrow bridge of Aywaille, on which the Austrians had placed two twelve-pounder guns, which fired case-shot on the attackers. They passed it, throwing into the river their dead and wounded who obstructed their passage. With their Generals in front, they descended the scarped bank of the Ourthe torrent and crossed it, partly by fording, partly by swimming, under a fearful fire of shot and case which carried away whole ranks. Neither this fire, nor the difficulties of the enterprise, nor the corpses heaped in the river, nor the perpendicular escarpment of the right bank, nor the entrenchments of the enemy, could prevent them from scaling the summits of the mountains and forcing all the passages. It is inconceivable how they were able to drag their artillery and to pass their cavalry over these rocks, but it is certain that it followed the infantry, as did the artillery.' 'M. Latour', who commanded this wing of the Austrians, continues Langeron, 'told me he had been beaten through his own fault, but that he had not believed men capable of what he saw

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 113-14; *Pajol*, i. 100-2.

the French do this day.'¹ This too, be it remembered, was done by the right wing, the divisions that had twice fled at Charleroi under Jourdan and often enough before that. There were mighty men before Agamemnon, and the grand descriptions of work done under the Empire must not overshadow the great deeds that passed almost unnoticed in the early years of the Revolutionary wars.

The Austrians, thus defeated, at once fell back eastwards and, abandoning Aix-la-Chapelle, took post on the Roer, some miles west of Cologne, which they covered. Clairfayt placed his right at Roermond on the Meuse, whence his line stretched up along the Roer, by Linnich, Aldenhoven, in front of Jülich (Juliers), Düren to Nideggen. Jourdan moved his right wing forward in pursuit, and Hatry and Championnet, crossing the Meuse at Liège, occupied Aix-la-Chapelle on the 22nd September, whilst Kléber with the left wing at first closed round Maestricht. Jourdan's instructions from the *Comité* and Carnot were to commence the siege of Maestricht at once, that is, to repeat the mistake of Dumouriez in 1793 when he did the same thing, instead of first driving the enemy over the Rhine. Too sensible to do this, Jourdan brought up Kléber's wing, leaving only 15,000 men under Duhesme to blockade the town.²

In this march of Kléber's wing we find Bernadotte and Ney acting together, as they did for some time. On the 24th September Kléber threw Bernadotte across the Meuse, and next day the division, the *avant-garde* of the wing, was checked at Keer. Kléber then sent up Ney with three cavalry regiments.³ On his way Ney saw on the river some barges laden with stores and ammunition for Maestricht and, turning to the bank, prepared to intercept the convoy. Already his men had stripped and were about to swim off, when the sailors in alarm sank their heavy barges. Then Ney pressed on for Keer and soon cleared the road, after which he covered Bernadotte's march northwards through Sittard with one cavalry regiment. At Gangelt on the 29th he was obliged to bring up another, when he drove the enemy back on Heinsberg, which they barricaded and prepared

¹ Pingaud, 97-8.

² *Pajol*, i. 100-1; *Pajol, Kléber*, 114-16; *Soult*, i. 201-2; *Jomini, Rév.*, vi. 26-34; *Pingaud*, 91-100; *Parfait*, 195-201.

³ 16th Chasseurs, 2nd and 4th Hussars.

for defence. Ney had only some light infantry with his cavalry, but he broke through the place and pursued till he reached Wassenberg on the Roer. One of the cavalry regiments under him was the 4th Hussars, in which he had just before been Captain, and this he seems to have used least, perhaps to avoid any friction with his late superiors. Bernadotte had hurried after him, but had halted at Heinsberg. The other divisions of the left wing (Friant and Richard) came up in rear and took post, so that the whole army, some 99,000 strong, lay along, but a short distance from, the Roer from Eschweiler to Heinsberg.¹

After many reconnaissances of the enemy's position which lay along the right bank of the Roer, except where at Aldenhoven their line was established on the left bank, Jourdan determined to attack, and gave his instructions to Schérer, Lefebvre, and Kléber, pointing out the difficulties he expected to meet.² Clairfayt's troops, 76,000 strong,³ were parcelled out on a long thin line, but his position was still very strong, for the river, generally fordable in many places, chanced now to be swollen by rain, and the fords could not be reckoned on. The enemy had broken the bridges, damaged the fords, and placed *chevaux de frise* in the crossing places. Strong entrenchments had been raised along the right bank, as well as at Aldenhoven.

The battle of the Roer, or, as it is sometimes called, the battle of Aldenhoven, which now took place on the 2nd October 1794, hardly requires detailed description. On the right Schérer with two of his divisions, Mayer and Marceau, moved on Düren, whilst Hacquin was detached far to the right southwards up the river by Kreuzau, to sweep round on the rear of Latour, who held Düren. Schérer won Düren, but by a mistake that Jourdan was to repeat with Saint-Cyr at Stockach in 1799, Hacquin had been sent on too wide a sweep round, so that he did not appear on the field till night, and Schérer consequently was unable to debouch from the place. Farther down below Jourdan Lefebvre stormed Linnich, which is on the left bank of the Roer, but the bridge had been burnt, the river was unfordable, and the town

¹ Ney, i. 50-3; *Pajol*, i. 110-14; *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 115-16; Jomini, *Rév.* vi. 33, makes the strength 25th Sept. 'en observation' 75,749, but of the 35,601 that he puts before Maestricht only 15,000 were now left there, so his figures on the Roer would be, say, 96,350. Vogel, xvii.

² For Jourdan's orders see Soult, i. 235-9.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. I deduct 7,000 for the Maestricht garrison.

was set on fire by the powerful artillery of the Austrians, which swept all the approaches, so that the division could only establish itself by the river and try to repair the bridge during the night.

Still farther down the Roer, Kléber attempted to cross opposite Ratheim, where an island existed but where the Wurm river had first to be passed. Bernadotte's troops led the way and, on reaching the island, were met by the heaviest fire of artillery and infantry. Here, as above, the ford had been destroyed, and a bridge the French had brought up was too short : still, one of Bernadotte's regiments with four companies of grenadiers swam across at night and got a footing on the right bank. Ney had not only led Bernadotte's advance with his cavalry, but he had been engaged here, and Bernadotte was generous in his report, writing to Kléber, 'I have much to be thankful for to the brave Ney ; he has seconded me with the intelligence you know of, and to tell the exact truth I ought to say that he has had much to do with the success we have obtained'.¹ Kléber had brought up Richard's division in support and, massing his artillery, he swept the heights of Ratheim to cover the party on the farther bank, while Bernadotte began the construction of a bridge at Vogelsang, and Richard threw another opposite Ratheim.²

While the two wings had made but little progress, Jourdan himself in the centre, with the divisions of Hatry, Morlot, and Championnet, some 26,000 men, and the 4,000 reserve cavalry of Dubois, marched for Aldenhoven west of Jülich and, notwithstanding the redoubts which guarded the plateau, took the position in less than two hours, when the enemy in his front retired on Jülich, followed to the *glacis* by the French. No part of the centre had got across the Roer, but Clairfayt, menaced on both wings, determined to recross the Rhine, and in the morning of the 23rd October Jülich was found evacuated, and the whole army pursued the retreating enemy. The battle had been very creditable to Jourdan, and even the critical Jomini³ can only say that no fault could have been found in his plan if the columns had been formed nearer the lines of the enemy

¹ Ney, i. 53-5.

² *Pajol*, i. 114-18 ; *Pajol, Kléber*, 117 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 40-1.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 35, 41-2.

(which seems true), if a preliminary reconnaissance had been made (which, however, seems to have been done thoroughly),¹ and if the right had been reinforced. This last seems to be the greatest blot, for Jourdan apparently did not hope for any real advance of his centre and left, but the error probably came from some nervousness about a return stroke by the enemy. It is also curious, as Jomini remarks, that no reserve was provided for such a long extent of attack, and the more so as Jourdan had made such good use of his reserves at Fleurus. Soult, whose criticisms are of much more value than those of Jomini, says 'this battle, although prolonged by a delay in the movement of the right wing, which had not been sufficiently reinforced, was very fine: it did the greatest honour to General Jourdan, whose dispositions were well made, and it proved all the valour of our troops, whose ardour could be hardly contained'.² The fog, which delayed the commencement of the battle from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m., may have had something to do with Hacquin's delay.³

The Austrians made no further real attempt to stand, and Clairfayt, abandoning all hopes of resistance, crossed the Rhine at Mülheim, close below Cologne, on the 6th October, Jourdan following to the right bank. On the left Ney, preceding Bernadotte, led the advance of Kléber's wing. The Austrians in front were in some confusion, and Werneck left behind him a copy of the orders for provisioning Maestricht. Bernadotte found these, and urged on Ney with two of his cavalry regiments⁴ supported by infantry to try to seize the convoy of flour which was making for Neuss and Düsseldorf on the Rhine. 'The General who commands with you', he wrote in his courteous style, 'is very fortunate. . . . I shall sleep for a moment; do the same, for I think we shall watch to-morrow.'⁵ There was not much sleep for the enemy in front of Ney. The convoy had taken shelter in Neuss, which was held by infantry and covered by 1,000 or 1,200 horse, but, although Ney had no infantry up, and although he could not tempt the enemy's cavalry into action, he marched on the town. Hardly had he fired ten shots

¹ 'In the numerous reconnaissances made by Jourdan himself,' *Pajol*, i. 114.

² Soult, i. 205.

³ For the battle see Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 34-43; *Pajol*, i. 114-18; *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 116-17; Soult, i. 202-5, 235-9; and the report of the Representative Gillet in Ney, i. 55-9; Vogel, xvii.

⁴ 4th Hussars, 16th Chasseurs.

⁵ Ney, i. 60-1.

into the place than the garrison set fire to their provisions and made off with the convoy, which they still hoped to save. Ney followed in hot haste, took part of the convoy, and hunted the rest with its escort over the Rhine into Düsseldorf. Then he was forced to halt to rest his men and horses.¹

Bernadotte and Ney had marched so rapidly that they had cut off Werneck, who, with the force which had faced Kléber on the Roer, had been marching from Wassenberg by Grevenbroich for Düsseldorf, but who was now forced to meet the main body of the enemy on his right. It was Kerpen with the late garrison of Roermond that Ney had struck at Neuss, and Kerpen professed to have beaten him off, but on the 4th October he crossed the Rhine by a flying bridge to Düsseldorf. When Ney's troops appeared on the bank, the garrison of Düsseldorf, Bavarians of the Palatinate, and nominally neutral, fired on them, and Ney had to content himself for the moment with falling on the scattered convoys of the enemy still on the right bank. Kléber, as quick to take offence as Ney himself, marched against the place with Richard's division, in which Mortier served, and on the night of the 6th October began a bombardment which burnt the Elector's Palace and stables. The troops of the Palatinate fled out of the town, when those of Kerpen took their places. On the 7th October Kléber sent in Ney with a summons for the place to surrender and to pay a million francs as contribution of war. Ney so alarmed the governor that the town opened its gates and the French obtained there, and from Ney's gleanings around, supplies of food, clothing, money, and *matériel* for the siege of Maestricht.² The Austrians having thus been thrown back over the Rhine, Kléber with his three divisions was sent back to besiege Maestricht, leaving Ney with his cavalry at Neuss. The rest of the army was now spread over the area of Bonn, Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Roermond.³ The troops required rest; some of Championnet's, for instance, were wearing wooden sabots, and some were clothed in pieces of old carpets.⁴

It is now time to pick up again the histories of the Armée de la Moselle and the Armée du Rhin, which I left at the end of

¹ Ibid., 60-2; *Pajol*, i. 118-20; *Pajol, Kléber*, 117-19.

² Ney, i. 62-3; *Pajol*, i. 120; *Pajol, Kléber*, 119; Pingaud, 102-3.

³ *Pajol*, i. 121; *Pajol, Kléber*, i. 119.

⁴ Rambaud, 272.

Chapter VI still facing north, while the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' lined the Rhine, facing north-east. Such a state of affairs could not possibly last. If the Allies had been strong, they could have driven a wedge between the two masses above and below them on the river, but, weak as they were, they professed to be astonished at being beaten by such wretched troops, and declared the French infantry to be miserable and their horses to be badly fed.¹ It was the French who took the offensive, and it was determined to wheel the two armies, the 'Moselle' and the 'Rhin', to their right, so that they should come in line with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' along the river. On the 2nd October Michaud and René Moreaux, meeting at Bitche, together with the Representatives, settled the operation, and on the 7th October René Moreaux began his march from Trèves,² whilst the 'Rhin' also swung round. In the latter army Saint-Cyr had handed over the 2nd Division to Desaix, and had himself taken over the left wing, a corps of 8,000 men.³ By the 25th he and Desaix were before Mayence. On their left the 'Moselle', leaving one division to hold the garrison of Luxembourg in check, came down both banks of the river Moselle, its right arriving before Mayence on the 24th October. Its left, consisting of two divisions (Taponier and Debrun) under Taponier, reached Coblenz on the 23rd. Here it was joined by Marceau's division of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which had been pushed up the Rhine by Jourdan at René Moreaux's request. The combined force drove Melas from Coblenz, Marceau getting the credit for the surrender of the town, much to the disgust of the 'Moselle'.⁴

Coblenz was a name hateful to the ears of French patriots, as it had long been the haunt of the *émigrés*. The Royalists there had taken as a device, 'L'honneur est à Coblenz', much like the motto on the rings adopted after the second Restoration by those who had been at Ghent with the King, 'L'honneur à moi'.⁵ Jourdan in reporting his success alluded to this device: 'Yes, doubtless it is there that Honour should be found, but it belongs to the soldiers faithful to the cause of Liberty.' Unfortunately Marceau had to report that few inhabitants attended

¹ Moreaux, 198-9.

² Ibid., 202.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 127, 476-9.

⁴ Ibid., 127-9, 374-9; Moreaux, 199-217; Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 87-8; *Vict. et Conq.*, iii. 199-203.

⁵ Castelane, i. 329.

the planting of the Tree of Liberty, but he considered it right to have one instead of the 'little monster who had lived there', a most inappropriate allusion to His Majesty Louis XVIII, now much in want of a resting-place.¹

This swinging round of the 'Moselle' eastwards was the last step in the great movement that brought all the four French armies in the north and east on one line along the Rhine from opposite Bâle to the sea. The 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and then the 'Nord', took up the line below the 'Moselle', and a new phase of the warfare began. At this time the men with whom we are concerned, who belonged to the two upper armies, the 'Rhin' and the 'Moselle', were placed as follows. In the 'Rhin', commanded by Michaud, the mass of which lay before Mayence, were Desaix and Saint-Cyr, both Generals of Division: Savary, a Captain of cavalry, had been lately A.D.C. to General Ferino, but had lost his post when that General was dismissed by the Representative Hentz about June 1794,² and was now taken as A.D.C. by Desaix.³ Rapp, not yet, I think, on the staff of Desaix, was a Lieutenant in a cavalry regiment.⁴ Captain Marmont, A.D.C. to General Bonaparte, now unemployed at Paris, was to join this army a few months later. In the 'Moselle', under René Moreaux, Davout was joining as General of Brigade from the unemployed list, and Oudinot, with the same rank, was at Trèves, recovering from wounds.

In the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' some rewards had been given, and Bernadotte had been promoted General of Division on the 22nd October 1794. In reality he had for some time been at the head of a division,⁵ and Kléber had reported after the battle of the Roer: 'I cannot praise General Bernadotte too highly; always under the sharpest fire, he made his dispositions with heroic calm; his indefatigable courage and his intrepidity decided the fate of the battle.'⁶ Soult, Chief of the Staff to Lefebvre, was promoted General of Brigade on the 11th October 1794,⁷ and

¹ Maze, 55.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 45-6.

³ Savary, i, Part I, 6; *Fastes*, iii. 540 must be wrong in putting this later. See also Lavalette, i, Part I, 126.

⁴ *Fastes*, iii. 507.

⁵ His division was originally 11,877 strong, but about the 23rd Sept. Kléber temporarily reduced it to six battalions and three cavalry regiments, so that Pajol then calls it a brigade. Pajol, i. 92, 107-8.

⁶ *Fastes*, i. 339.

⁷ In his *Memoirs*, page 207, he says by mistake the 11th November.

fell to Poncet's division. Hoche, who had liked Soult in the *Armée de la Moselle* at the relief of Landau, had recently been given the command of the *Armée des Côtes de Cherbourg* in La Vendée and proposed to him to go and serve with that army, assuring him that he would soon become General of Division. Ambitious as Soult was, he honourably and wisely preferred to fight against foreigners instead of against his own countrymen, and he remained in Poncet's division, under Hatry, inactive at Krefeld. Long afterwards, when he had had great experience, he dwelt on the importance of such a position as he had held in Lefebvre's division, and the fine schooling it afforded to an officer, adding, 'especially if he has the good fortune to be under the orders of a good chief', as he had found Lefebvre,¹ who seems to have been strict and exacting, but these are qualities required in command and which are never resented by subordinates with their hearts in their work. This experience of Soult may have had something to do with his selection as Major-General in 1815. I presume that the handing over of his work as Chief of the Staff detained Soult, so that he joined Poncet's division only after the siege of Maestricht, in which it was employed, had been completed.

Marceau's division was brought back to Bonn at the end of October, but was again detached to Coblenz to take the place of Taponier's division of the 'Moselle', which went to besiege Luxembourg. An amusing specimen of the almost hostile feeling between the rival armies is given in a letter from Marceau to Jourdan, in which Marceau complains of the state of the barracks handed over to him by troops of the 'Moselle'. At another time we find him speaking of 'cette maudite armée de la Moselle'.² He appears to have boxed the ears of a commissariat officer for giving short weight: indeed Marceau will always be a sympathetic figure to soldiers.³ It should be noticed that the detachment of Marceau was made at the request of René Moreaux; Jourdan did not think it necessary, but prudently referred the matter to Gillet, who sanctioned it.⁴

¹ Soult, i. 206-8.

² Maze, 156, 173.

³ Moreaux, 214 note, 355-7.

⁴ Ibid., 350-1. For Marceau's expedition see Maze, 154-74; Moreaux, 210-17, 342-55; Parfait, 201-2.

The main army of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' now entered on a long period of inactivity, whilst Kléber with the 'Armée devant Maestricht' (the divisions of Duhesme, Bernadotte, and Poncet) besieged that place. Meanwhile Lt.-Colonel Adjutant-General Ney with his 400 horse made expeditions to Cleves and even to Nijmegen, apparently in preparation for a future advance. Kléber was asking for him, but Jourdan did not want to lose so useful a partisan leader : however, some excuse brought Ney, possibly not quite by chance, near Maestricht, when Kléber got the convenient Gillet to keep him. 'I retain him', wrote the Representative on the 13th October, 'at the request of Kléber, who wishes to bring the besieged to reason and to disgust them with sallies.'¹ Most of the Generals at this time were young and unworn, and we find Kléber later on trying to collect again the 'bande joyeuse', as he called the officers with him.² One surprise the besiegers had. A large cavern existed under one of the forts and, when the explosion of a mine by the enemy opened it to the French, they dashed in to find themselves confronted by a large herd of pigs, which had been concealed there.³ Ney was twice sent into the town and, strangely enough, was admitted to argue with the Council and the Governor. On the second occasion he denounced the latter, the Prince of Hess, for sacrificing the town to his personal glory, and made such representations of the success of the French armies elsewhere and of the melancholy fate of the town if further defended⁴ that the Governor capitulated on the 4th of November and the garrison marched out with the honours of war on the 7th.⁵ Jourdan was inspecting the works at the time, but immediately returned to the Rhine, to allow Kléber the full satisfaction for his own work. Besides guns and stores, the Republic got a prize in the celebrated head of the Mosauras, which was known to be in the place. The *savants* with the army had requested that the spot where it was housed should be held sacred from artillery fire : men could be replaced, but not the fossil. It was safely taken to

¹ Ney, i. 63-4.

² *Pajol*, i. 141-2 note 1 ; Ney, i. 69.

³ Ney, i. 64-5 ; *Pajol*, i. 129-30.

⁴ This, I think, is stated only in Ney, *Méms.*, i. 66-8.

⁵ For this siege see Musset-Pathay, 459-84 and Plate XIV ; *Pajol*, i. 123-37 ; *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 119-26 ; *Fastes*, i. 407, but in reality the place was never assaulted.

Paris, where it still remains in the Jardin des Plantes. A cast of it is in the British Museum.¹

Bernadotte was now appointed Governor of Maestricht, with a brigade to hold it, whilst the rest of the late besieging force was brought up to the Rhine. Ney apparently went, with the two divisions which remained to Kléber, to the centre of the army, which lay from Cologne to Zons.² Kléber himself, much to his dissatisfaction, was sent away to command the blockade of Mayence, to which I shall soon come. Grumbling, and complaining of his health, which always broke down when disagreeable work was in prospect, Kléber started from Cologne on the 23rd November 1794. He had written to Jourdan a letter honourable to both men: 'It would be necessary, dear comrade, that you should know all the esteem and the sincere attachment I have vowed to you, to understand the pain I have felt at receiving the order to leave the victorious army you command. Why should I hide it from you? I wept like a child at it. . . . I ask two favours from you, the first to grant me permission to take Ney with me. . . . I think they entrust me with the expedition to Mayence on account of the local knowledge I acquired during the last siege of that place. I shall do, as everywhere else, all that depends on me. If I have the good fortune to succeed, I ask no other recompense than to return under your orders: that is the limit of my ambition.'³ He was sincere, and the tribute to Jourdan was fully deserved: it would have been well for both men had Kléber been in the same mind at the end of 1796. Ney soon followed him.

Jourdan had already lost another of his Lieutenants in Schérer, who had gone to command the Armée d'Italie. On the 9th October he had written to Jourdan in the same strain as Kléber now wrote: 'To tell you that I regret no longer serving in the army you command is to prove to you that, since I have known you, I have loved and esteemed the brave General to whom the country owes gratitude for one of the most glorious campaigns cited in the world's triumphs.' The worthy Schérer added a postscript: 'I send you the little barrel of Malaga of

¹ *Life of William Buckland*, London, Murray, 212 note.

² For this movement and consequent distribution see *Pajol*, i. 135-42; *Pajol, Kléber*, 122-6.

³ *Pajol, Kléber*, 127.

which I told you.’¹ This, as Charles Lamb would have said, was true friendship.

It would be convenient to close the history of this campaign at the end of 1794, but the action of the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’ is divided into two distinct phases. In the first it worked in co-operation with the ‘Nord’, and it is best to complete that story before entering into its work with the ‘Rhin-et-Moselle’. In January 1795 Pichegru, as we have seen, threw forward his right (Macdonald’s division and that of Moreau, temporarily under Vandamme) over the Rhine to Gröningen, to finish with the English.² To support this advance the left of the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’ (Lefebvre’s division, followed by that of Morlot) crossed the Rhine also and occupied Arnheim and Doesborgh,³ and later Zutphen and part of Overijssel.⁴ Here Lefebvre came in contact with the officers of the ‘Nord’, especially with the hot-tempered, hard-fighting Vandamme. A great deal of confusion occurred, as Jourdan seems to have handed over his two divisions to Pichegru for the moment without informing Lefebvre, and about the 23rd February 1795 Lefebvre, receiving orders from Pichegru, with whom he had thought he had nothing to do, and being, as Hoche had put it, ‘haut à la vérité’, roughly refused to obey any orders except those of Jourdan.⁵ Pichegru took this so much to heart that on the 24th February he informed Vandamme that he would renounce all command over any part of the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’ and would make a formal declaration to that effect to the Representatives. However, on the 1st March 1795 we find Lefebvre writing to Vandamme of his pleasure in at last knowing whom he was to obey: this fortunate result had been attained by Jourdan’s orders that the two divisions were to be under Pichegru.⁶

Doubtless Lefebvre had remembered how in 1793 Pichegru had wanted to get rid of him, and he had not been sorry to irritate him again. His own correspondence now speaks well for his interest in the welfare of his men, and he vowed eternal gratitude to Vandamme if that General would send him forage. The worthy Vandamme was sometimes in a virtuous mood and, remembering the reputation for plundering he managed to

¹ Maze, 386.

² Phipps, 328–31.

³ A little east of Arnheim.

⁴ Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 208–12. For Map see Vogel, xii.

⁵ Cunéo d’Ornano, ii. 35.

⁶ Du Casse, i. 232.

acquire later, it is amusing to find Lefebvre defending himself to him against accusations of 'the most horrible disorders'.¹ No evidence of such disorders seems to have been procurable; indeed, as Lefebvre considered that his having collected as many of the country carts as possible, to supply his men, was 'rather a violent measure', we may take it that he had all possible consideration for the inhabitants. Later, when the English had embarked and the 'Nord' had swung round almost southwards facing Berg, the two divisions of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' were drawn back by Jourdan to the left bank of the Rhine.² Although we shall find the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' receiving reinforcements from the 'Nord' later on, the co-operation between the two armies now ceased and the 'Nord' became an inactive force. For the misfortune of France and of Jourdan, Pichegru was soon to pass from the command on Jourdan's left to that on his right, with some control over him.

It is at this period that the effects of Fleurus can be better judged than at the moment when it was gained. Valmy only beat off the advance of an army not really strong enough for its task. Jemappes had only made a temporary break in the enemy's line. Wattignies, like Valmy, had momentarily checked the enemy. At Fleurus the line of the invasion had been definitely and finally pierced and driven back. It is characteristic of Jourdan that he should have been hammering away so long close to the spot where at last he was victorious. At Wattignies on the 16th October 1793 he had cut through to Maubeuge, and then had tried to advance on Charleroi. Dismissed for not following Caesar's maxims (and one would like to have Caesar's opinion on the Legions of the Revolution), he returned in 1794 to the same attempt, fighting on, first defeated, then victorious, until June 1794 saw him where he had hoped to have been in October of the previous year.

As for Jomini's suggestion about what Jourdan might have done if he had been reinforced from Pichegru's 'Nord',³ all that, useful perhaps to the student, has no value with reference to facts. Pichegru was not a good comrade, but no commander of that or perhaps of any period would willingly have weakened himself in favour of a rival army. The Government might have

¹ Du Casse, i. 227, 240-1.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 212.

³ *Ibid.*, 318-19, 321.

ordered such a course, but the Government practically meant, for military movements, Carnot, whose idea was to avoid the enemy's centre and to strike at their flanks. Far from drawing troops from Pichegru to strengthen Jourdan, it was exactly the opposite course that Carnot wished to pursue, and it was only in disregard of his instructions that Jourdan did not send 15,000 or 16,000 men to the 'Nord'. The wonderful advance made in Holland, really due to Jourdan's victory, caused Pichegru's share in this campaign, as far as the public was concerned, to eclipse that of Jourdan, but all the real work had been done by the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. And, while Jourdan directed his own troops and fought his own battles, the troops of the 'Nord' were never so successful as when their commander was absent and when they were guided by a joint committee of Generals of Division.

I have already referred to Jomini's criticisms:¹ the faults found with Jourdan in his general observations practically rest on the fact that in the first part of the campaign he did not use his right enough. It is impossible to assert that Jourdan was a General of the first class, but it must be remembered that, for example, the unwise movement on Mons was ordered by the *Comité*, and Soult, then on the staff of Lefebvre and so likely to know a good deal of the inner history of the campaign, expressly says that Jourdan intended to march on Beaulieu's force, between Sombref and Gembloux, and thence on Liége.² Jomini fairly enough praises the operations at the end of September, when Jourdan did repeatedly use his right. Also high praise must be given for his disregard of the orders that would have halted his army in its sweeping advance. When fresh in the saddle and close to the Government, he may not have operated to the best advantage, but, when firm in his seat and well away from the frontier, he at once made much more skilful use of his army. In other words, taking Carnot as the military adviser of the moment, the operations were at their best when there was least of Carnot and most of Jourdan.

Much of the credit of Jourdan's victories is sometimes attributed to Kléber. No commander is independent of his Lieutenants, and, had Augereau bolted at Castiglione, or Joubert

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 315-25; Jomini, *Grandes Opérations*, vi, Chapter XXII.

² Soult, i. 176.

at Rivoli, no efforts of Bonaparte could have won those fights. Kléber was a fine commander, and probably a better General than Jourdan, but it was not by Kléber that the decisive blow both on the Ourthe and on the Roer had been delivered. Kléber was to show in dealing with Beurnonville how heartily he despised a commander who sought shelter behind him, and his high opinion of Jourdan at this period proves that he believed the army had been well led by the proper General. It is true that Jourdan had superior forces throughout this campaign, that his troops were all of one nation, and that the Allies helped him to the uttermost by their mistakes, but much credit remains for him. Just as a carriage, passing from a muddy to a clean part of the road, seems to spring forward, as if the load were lightened, so military history, now freed from the bloody slime of the Revolution, changes its limping, lumbering march for direct advances and well-organized attacks. After all the details of clumsy blundering and cold-blooded butchery of brave men, the history of the war brightens as the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' takes its place in the field. As I have said, there was something of a medieval touch about Fleurus, but the march on the Roer is modern enough. Hallam places the end of the confused period of the Middle Ages at the moment when the first lances of France gleamed along the defiles of the Alps: so we may date the end of the wretched times of misrule, and the beginning of that brilliant period of military history which ended at Waterloo, at the time when Jourdan's bayonets swept on till they glittered on the banks of the Rhine.

L'ARMÉE DE SAMBRE-ET-MEUSE, L'ARMÉE DE LA MOSELLE, AND L'ARMÉE DU RHIN

VIII

THE SIEGES OF LUXEMBOURG, MANNHEIM, AND MAYENCE

(November 1794 to April 1795)

Composition of the besieging armies. Formation of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Return of Pichegru.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

1st April. Insurrection of 12th Germinal suppressed in Paris.
5th April. Peace of Bâle between France and Prussia.
14th April. English army withdrawn from Holland.

Now came the period of sieges, during which the organization of the 'Moselle' and the 'Rhin' remained in a curious state of suspended animation, and their divisions were intermingled, until in April 1795 the welding of the two forces into one new army, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', cleared the situation. The three places that had to be dealt with were Luxembourg, which was now completely isolated; the *tête-de-pont* which Mannheim, itself on the right bank of the river, held on the left bank; and the great fortress of Mayence, also on the left bank. The Republican administrators acted with characteristic confusion. By a decree of the Representatives with the 'Moselle' and 'Rhin', dated the 29th November 1794, the two armies were divided into three bodies for the sieges, the Armée devant Luxembourg, the Armée devant Mannheim, and the Armée devant Mayence. The divisions of the 'Moselle' lining the river from Andernach to Rheinfels were to be relieved by troops of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and were to carry out the siege of Luxembourg, whilst the 'Rhin' was to attack the *tête-de-pont* of Mannheim, and the left of the 'Rhin' with the right of the 'Moselle' was to undertake the formidable siege of Mayence.

All this was simple enough: it was in the question of the

commands for these different attacks that confusion began. In the middle of October 1794, during the joint movement on Mayence, the Representatives had given René Moreaux the command of the two armies, or at least of all the forces acting against Mayence: Michaud was to hand over to him more than half the 'Rhin', and with the rest was to guard the river and bombard Mannheim. René Moreaux, however, from some unexplained reason, not only did not choose to assume this command, but, having seen his right posted before Mayence, set off for Luxembourg without notifying Michaud, and thenceforward devoted himself to the siege in which his left was engaged. Then on the 26th October it was determined that Michaud should direct the attack on Mayence with his own left and the three divisions of the 'Moselle' that were before that place, but were not considered as an integral part of his army: he was also to direct the bombardment of Mannheim and to guard the left bank of the river from the Nahe upwards. René Moreaux was to carry out the blockade of Luxembourg and to guard the left bank of the river from the Nahe down to Bonn, where the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' took up that duty. René Moreaux, as will have been seen, carried out his part of this division of duty, but Michaud devoted himself to the works before Mannheim, leaving the important command of the five divisions before Mayence to chance. I must now give a brief history of each of these three armies, reminding the reader that, whilst at first the two Commanders-in-Chief and their staffs were concerned with the two sieges, Mannheim and Luxembourg, their respective outer wings took no part in the important operations before Mayence carried out by the inner wings.¹

The *Armée devant Luxembourg* was at first composed of three divisions of the 'Moselle' (Ambert, Debrun, and Péduchel). About the 20th December 1794 it was joined by a fourth division (Taponier²), which was brought from the *Armée devant Mayence*, but originally came from the 'Moselle'. This raised the strength to 23,500 men. Oudinot would have come with Ambert's division had he not been detained at Trèves,³ but another General of Brigade, Davout, joined the force. In August 1793 Davout, then Adjutant-General with the rank of Colonel, employed in La Vendée, in the *Armée des Côtes de la*

¹ Moreaux, 221-32.

² Pouget, 27, 28.

³ Moreaux, 250.

Rochelle, had been posted to the 'Nord' as General of Division, whereupon he had resigned both his actual and his new rank on the ground that he was a *ci-devant noble*. Since then he had been living at his home at Ravières, near Auxerre, in the Department of the Yonne. Now that the Terror was over and common sense had begun to replace Revolutionary follies, so that it was safe for an ex-noble to serve without being constantly 'suspect', he began to try to get himself recalled, using the influence of the Representative Turreau (a very different man to his brother, the ill-famed General Turreau), who had married the mother of Davout, and who was supporting him. To his friend Pille, employed in the War Office, Davout also wrote, complaining that he, who had fired on Dumouriez, was left forgotten in obscurity, and Carnot was also applied to, as well as the Representative Delmas.¹ On the 24th September 1794 he was at last replaced on the active list as General of Brigade, and appointed to the Armée des Côtes de Brest. Disliking the idea of returning to La Vendée, he pointed out that he was more accustomed to cavalry than to infantry, and that his arm was much more numerous in the 'Moselle' than in 'Brest'. Pille represented to the *Comité* that the 'Moselle' required another brigadier, and Davout joined Debrun's division before Luxembourg probably about the end of October or the beginning of November 1794.²

Davout soon began to distinguish himself, and on the night of the 24th November 1794 he led what René Moreaux described as a daring expedition, burning three magazines, the stores in which could not be removed, because they lay within half a gun-shot of the place.³ On the 9th February 1795 René Moreaux died of fever,⁴ when Ambert, the senior General, took command of the siege. The garrison of the place, of which Field Marshal Bender was the Governor, held out, but was believed to be getting short of food, and Davout volunteered for another expedition to burn the mill of Eich, which was the last remaining to the defenders. Ambert agreed, and on the night of the 4th March General Davout with one company of grenadiers, guided by a deserter, got into the covered way and, after a *mêlée*

¹ J. P. B. Delmas (1754-98).

² Vigier, i. 43-8.

³ Moreaux, 249-50, 367; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 381, 383; Vigier, i. 48.

⁴ Moreaux, 261-4, 375-7.

with the covering post of Austrians, in which for a moment Davout was in the hands of the enemy, the mill was burnt, and the party regained the camp under a shower of bullets, but with a loss of only two men.¹ Again on the 19th March, when the garrison made a sortie in force, supported by fourteen guns, and the weight of the attack fell on Debrun's division, Davout was one of the officers whose conduct was described as deserving the highest praise.² On the 20th March Ambert and his divisions of the 'Moselle' marched to join the Armée devant Mayence,³ Davout of course accompanying them.

The siege of Luxembourg was now continued by three divisions of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' under Hatry, Soult having a brigade in one of them. On the 7th June 1795 the garrison, starved out, surrendered, when the divisions rejoined the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', Soult going with Poncet's division to the right wing, under Marceau.⁴ Mortier, promoted Colonel on the 13th June 1795, remained, I presume, as Adjutant-General in Poncet's division, but Soult does not mention him.

The Armée devant Mannheim had a very short history, as far as we are concerned. Mannheim itself stood on the right bank, out of reach of the French, who could only attack its *tête-de-pont* on the left bank: a garrison of 15,000 held Mannheim, of which 3,000 were placed in the *tête-de-pont*. The attack was begun by Vachot's division of the 'Rhin', Michaud superintending the operations. On the 10th October 1794 the French took up their position, and about the 9th December Vincent's division of the 'Moselle' arrived to reinforce the assailants. Sorbier, not the well-known artilleryman of the Empire, directed the works.⁵ Ice in the river hindered the communications of the defenders with the right bank, and after a bombardment the *tête-de-pont* was given up on the 25th December 1794 under a capitulation by which the garrison withdrew into Mannheim, and the French engaged not to bombard the town of Mannheim from the left bank as long as the war was carried on on that bank only. As

¹ Vigier, i. 49-50; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 385-6.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 386-7.

³ *Vict. et Conq.*, iv. 146-7.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 171, makes Poncet's division come up in rear of the Armée devant Mayence, but I follow Soult, i. 209, and *Pajol*, i. 189.

⁵ Colonel Jean-François Sorbier de Pougna-dore~~esse~~ (1744- ?), Chevalier de l'Empire.

for the attacking force, Vincent's division of the 'Moselle' joined the *Armée devant Mayence*, and the division of the 'Rhin' under Schaal remained on the left bank, opposite Mannheim.¹

The *Armée devant Mayence* had the most formidable task before it, for, as long as the enemy held that place, they had a hold on the left bank which enabled them to throw their forces across at any moment. The place had therefore to be taken, but it was held by a large garrison, some 22,000 strong, and, as the French could not invest it on the right bank also, it received constant reinforcements and supplies, for it was the centre of the enemy's line, the place at which the left of the Prussians met the right of the Austrians.² For long therefore the history of the struggle on the Rhine is really also that for the possession of Mayence, as in Italy in 1796 the history of the campaign was that of the struggle for the possession of Mantua. The French lay in front of Mayence, much as the Allies were to lie in front of the south side of Sevastopol. In each case the fact that the town was open in rear created the main difficulty of the capture; indeed the sufferings of the besiegers from inclement weather and from want of supplies were much the same in both cases. A full and interesting account of the attack or blockade will be found in the works of Saint-Cyr,³ and many future Marshals appeared before the place.

The besieging force consisted of three divisions under Ambert, from the right of the 'Moselle', and the divisions of Desaix and of Saint-Cyr from the 'Rhin',⁴ but the number of divisions varied throughout the siege. Each General seems to have done what pleased him best and no one was willing to take the chief command. Soon, however, it became known that Maestricht

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 128, 398-410, Plan, p. 389; *Pajol*, i. 156, 172, note pp. 242-3. The capitulation as given by Saint-Cyr only stipulates that the place should not be bombarded from the left bank during the rest of the war, but the restriction of this given by Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. pp. 188-9 note 1, and *Pajol*, i. p. 242 note 1, seems in agreement with Pichegru's proceedings in 1795.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 162.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 128-258, 480-514, and Atlas VII; Musset-Pathay, Plate IV, *bis*; Jomini, *Rév.*, vi. 88-91, vii. 52-6, 250-61; *Vict. et Conq.*, iv. 118-29, 273-9, v. 10-13, 17-21; *Pajol*, i. 140-77, 238-51; *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 126-49, 183-9; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 67-82; *Savary*, i, Part I, 6-7; Lavalette, i, Part I, 122-33; Marmont, i. 67-76, 129-43.

⁴ Moreaux, 200-11; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 128-30.

had capitulated to a force from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' under Kléber, and Desaix and Saint-Cyr now suggested that Kléber had 'le plus de droits' for this post,¹ a delicious phrase which it is well Kléber did not hear. In reality there was much to be said for the appointment, for Kléber had served in the garrison of Mayence during the siege of 1793, when he belonged to the 'Rhin'. Accordingly, much to his disgust, as we have seen, he was chosen, and took command on the 1st December 1794, his total force consisting of 44,150 men.² 'It is not', he said, 'a garrison that we are attacking: it is an army entrenched behind a fortress, and troops that are always fresh,' and, when Gillet tried to keep Ney with the main body of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' on the ground that a cavalry officer would be useless in a siege, Kléber insisted that it was not a siege and that there were daily skirmishes of some importance: 'Ney est donc essentiel ici.' He promised that Ney should not remain long, but meanwhile, 'I shall make a strong demand for him to the *Comité*, as the recompense due to me for my own work.' On the 10th December Ney was promoted Colonel Adjutant-General and joined Kléber with that rank.³

The long blockade went on, and the troops suffered much from the intense cold, which was worse, says Saint-Cyr, than that in Russia. Want of supplies thinned the ranks, so that one company, for instance, had but a single man fit for service.⁴ The constant interference of the Representatives was a very sore point with Kléber and his Generals. He persuaded the Representatives to abandon a project for a direct assault, which he would have adopted, 'if I had my little Philistines', as he called his men of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse': in his present army he knew neither men nor Generals, and was hardly known by them. Any one that knew his Kléber would have anticipated what was to happen now. On the 13th February, his convenient health having given way, he obtained permission from the Representatives to undergo a cure for skin disease, and went off to Strasbourg, merely informing Michaud, who was himself resigning his post.⁵

In this siege or blockade of Mayence we hear little of Kléber's

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 128-9; 146-7.

² Pajol, *Kléber*, 132.

³ *Ibid.*, 136, 138.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 153-4.

⁵ Pajol, *Kléber*, 142-6; *Pajol*, i. 168-72, 176-7; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 162-3.

relations with such men as Desaix and Saint-Cyr, who commanded his right and centre respectively : we can only imagine they were not very cordial. Both Saint-Cyr and Desaix must have met Ney here, but perhaps, as Generals of Division, they would not pay much attention to a hot-headed young staff-officer.¹

Here we may deal for a moment with Ney's personal fortunes. It was for his skill as a cavalry leader that Kléber had got him transferred temporarily from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and had placed him in command of the cavalry of the left of the three 'Attacks' into which the besieging force was divided. The enemy had armed a redoubt on his extreme right, close to the river, in rear of the brick kiln of Mombach,² and Kléber ordered the commander of the left to destroy this work, directing him to entrust Ney with the operation. Accordingly, whilst a brigade under Argoult was formed up as a support, Ney was given a body of Dragoons and a party of Voltigeurs under Lt.-Colonel Molitor, an officer who was already distinguished and who became Marshal under the Second Restoration.³ The ground was hard frozen, and Ney saw his horses well roughed, then, telling Molitor that he would try a stroke in the style of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', he sent the infantry against the face of the work, whilst he himself, with his cavalry, made for its left rear. Crossing the frozen marshes and streams, and then turning to his left, he penetrated into the gorge of the work with the few of his men who had been able or willing to follow him in his dangerous path, whilst Molitor's party escalated the parapet. This plan is interesting as it was what Ney was to try with success at Neuwied in 1797. But at Neuwied he was completely in rear of the enemy, whilst here they had behind him batteries on the islands in the river, and their guns on the Peters-Aue swept the ground with ease. Many men fell, and Argoult ordered the retreat : Ney, seriously wounded in the shoulder, had to be carried back to the lines, whilst the enemy re-occupied the work at night.⁴

Ney's wound was so severe that he became delirious and

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 133.

² For plan see Plate VII, Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas.

³ Général Comte Gabriel-Jean-Joseph Molitor (1770-1849), Marshal 1823, Pair de France 1824, *Fastes*, iii. 409-12.

⁴ Pajol, i. 160 ; Ney, i. 70.

refused to allow the surgeons to touch him. Then, according to the writer of his memoirs, something resembling the treatment of Saul was tried. The girls of the neighbouring village, with musicians, came to dance around his sick-bed, led, of all caperers in the world, by General Kléber and the Representative Merlin de Thionville. To see the tall Kléber dancing the *farandole* might well have brought a man back from the brink of the grave, and Ney, either thus cheered, or preferring the lancet to the music of his friends, submitted his arm to the surgeon.¹ Youth and strength told in his favour, but he had to leave the army for Aix-la-Chapelle. One trouble lay on his mind : Merlin de Thionville had promoted him to be General of Brigade and, like many officers at this time, he disliked high rank. Perhaps a certain disinclination to quit his active, semi-independent life of partisan for the more restrained post of General of Brigade, subordinated to a General of Division, and not brought so much under the eye of the Commander-in-Chief, had its weight in Ney's mind, and also this promotion might well entail permanent separation from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', the army so dear to him and to Kléber. He made such strong remonstrances to the committee at Paris charged with the organization of the armies that his promotion was cancelled, and he was not to become General of Brigade until August 1796. How little thought of refusing any elevation had the Ney of the Empire !

Some months earlier, under the Terror, such a refusal might have been 'suspect', but now Merlin was not offended, and even suggested that he should go home to Sarrelibre (as Sarrelouis was styled for the moment), to finish his cure, accompanied by a surgeon. 'Return soon to lend us your arm against the enemies of the country.' Ney probably left soon after the 7th January 1795, the date of this letter, and Kléber on the 10th February of the same year gave him the following certificate : 'Certified that the citizen Ney, *adjudant-général chef-de-brigade*, has commanded bodies of cavalry with distinction during the whole of the campaign with the army of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' ; that in every operation with which he has been entrusted he has displayed intrepid courage and consummate intelligence, especially at the siege of Maestricht, where his valour rendered very great services to the public cause ; that, having come voluntarily to

¹ Ney, i. 71.

the army before Mayence to co-operate in the capture of that place, he has received in a sortie a gun-shot which suspends his activity until his health be re-established.¹ This was the officer who considered himself unfit for promotion. The old cooper at Sarrelouis must have opened his eyes wide when his trooper son returned in this style as Colonel-on-the-Staff, deluged with compliments by the severe Kléber and the hard Representative Merlin de Thionville. Ney, however, chafed at inaction, and when Kléber, who had been restored to the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and who may have believed that Ney's health, like his own, depended a good deal on the post he was to occupy, wrote to him to join the army as soon as he felt well enough, he cast off the surgeons, and left for the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', where we shall soon find him.

To return to the Armée devant Mayence, which was left commanderless by the departure of Kléber on the 13th February 1795. The usual curious contest as to who should *not* be the chief took place. Michaud, unwilling to take the work himself, proposed to the Representatives that Desaix should be appointed, and this was a very natural and proper choice, for, as Michaud wrote, 'the military genius of General Desaix, the frequent proofs of courage which he has given during this war, make me consider him as very fit to command an army with great success'. The mere idea made Desaix indignant: 'What', he cried, 'is it for this you have brought me here? I to command the army! I, who am the youngest of the officers! Representative, you will not listen to such a proposition, you will not deal so unjustly with old soldiers who have deserved far better of their country.'² Saint-Cyr was equally unwilling to command, and so were all the Generals of Division. With absolute disregard of the 'old soldiers' cry, they nominated Schaal³ to the Representatives, as a worthy officer who knew the ground since he, like Kléber, had been one of the defenders of the place when it was besieged by the enemy in 1793. Schaal, whose name occurs frequently enough in these campaigns, had been Lt.-Colonel of the 93rd regiment, had been promoted General of

¹ Ney, i. 71-2.

² I think this is the right time for this speech of Desaix, see Bonnal, *Desaix*, 67-8, and Pajol, *Kléber*, 147.

³ Général François-Ignace Schaal, Chuquet, *Mayence*, 159; Pajol, i. 161 note.

Brigade on the 3rd May 1794, and was now forty-seven years old. It was pointed out that he was only a General of Brigade, but Saint-Cyr and the others of divisional rank made nothing of such a trivial detail : let him command, and they would obey him. The most curious point of the affair is that they actually did so. Kléber ordered Schaal to take command, and this remarkable arrangement was a great success.¹ Schaal did not become General of Division until the 13th June 1795.

The massing before Mayence of five divisions of both armies, the 'Rhin' and the 'Moselle', a force of some 44,150 men, was an obvious prelude to the union of the two bodies. There was no longer any reason for keeping them separate ; they were both engaged in the same work, guarding the Rhine and blockading Mayence, whilst the improvement of the troops, and also of the staff, now made it easier for a commander to handle bodies larger than the first armies. It was therefore, in April 1795, a natural proceeding on the part of the Government to amalgamate the two armies as the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Unfortunately neither army could furnish a commander for the new force. The 'Moselle' had no General of any high repute. In the 'Rhin' Michaud, a good but modest General, was not thought well of at Paris, and on the 26th March he had left the front to recover from wounds, offering to take a division under any successor that might be appointed.² Neither Desaix nor Saint-Cyr would accept any command higher than that of a division. Had the *Comité* thought of Desaix and insisted on his accepting the post, in all probability the 1795-6 campaigns of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', conducted by Desaix and Jourdan, would have been a great success and might have profoundly influenced the fortunes of Bonaparte, whose career was to owe so much to the disasters on the Rhine.

The Government, however, thought they had a ready-made commander in Pichegru, whose prestige stood high above his deserts. 'The Conqueror of Holland', as he was called, had always been fortunate in the support of the Representatives with him, and we have seen how Hoche nearly paid with his life for his temporary success in their struggle for command in 1793. His choice at the time seemed natural, and may have been the pleasanter to him after his supersession in 1793 by Hoche, now

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 163-4, 514.

² Pajol, *Kléber*, 147.

relegated to La Vendée. Pichegru was appointed and, handing over the 'Nord' to his friend Moreau, he reached Paris just as the Jacobins tried their stroke of the 12^e Germinal (or 1st April 1795), when the Convention placed its troops in the Capital under his command. On the 2nd April the *Comité* nominated Kléber to replace Pichegru temporarily.¹ Kléber apparently was still at Strasbourg, looking after his own health. In March he had declined to return to the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' to replace Jourdan (who was ill for a time), probably suspecting some trick to get him into permanent command, although ready enough to serve under Jourdan. The temporary post now assigned to him, with the certainty of being relieved by Pichegru, was not so alarming, and, writing to Jourdan to apply for him, so that he might not be stuck to the 'Rhin', he arrived on the 10th April 1795 before Mayence, where the Representatives at once put him in orders to command temporarily the 'Rhin' and 'Moselle', not yet amalgamated. Limiting himself to an inspection of the lines of investment, and directing that no change should be made, and especially that no attack should be attempted, he left on the 11th April to arrange for the positions to be taken up by the divisions of the 'Moselle' that were coming up from Luxembourg.² These divisions (Taponier, Debrun, and Ambert) are said to have joined before Mayence, but one at least, that of Debrun, was placed higher up the river at Speyer.³ Certainly Davout, who led a brigade under Debrun, was there, and corresponded with Marceau, whom he had known in La Vendée, and who was now commanding the right division of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' at Coblenz.⁴ Peace was hoped for, and Davout intended to take Marceau with him to his own home at Ravières, where a marriage was planned between him and Julie, Davout's sister; she, however, eventually married General Beaumont.⁵

At last on the 16th April 1795 Pichegru arrived at Mayence from Paris, whence he came with all the credit for having suppressed the insurrection of the Jacobins, and having been acclaimed by the Convention as the saviour of his country.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., 147-9.

³ Taponier also went to Speyer, Pouget, 28.

⁴ Vigier, i. 50-6.

⁵ Général Comte Bonnin de la Bonninière de Beaumont (1763-1830). Married 12th July 1801 Julie-Catherine-Charlotte-Françoise d'Avout, who died 1846.

Kléber left the same day to rejoin Jourdan and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. The Armée devant Mayence now ceased to exist, at least nominally, although Pichegru treated it much as a separate force. The two armies, the 'Moselle' and the 'Rhin', were now amalgamated as one army, the well-known 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. The whole situation of France was altering. The treaty of Bâle, of the 5th April 1795, with Prussia detached that nation from the coalition against France, and gave the Republic an acknowledged position amongst the powers: this was soon followed by peace with Spain and with many of the minor states of Germany, whilst in October the new Directorial Constitution gave the country a more manageable government. The first Directors were Barras, La Révellière-Lépeaux, Rewbell, Carnot, and Le Tourneur de La Manche.¹

It is true that I have already described Pichegru when he came in 1793 to command the 'Rhin', and also when he went to the 'Nord' in February 1794,² but now he was in some respects a changed man. Before, he had been reserved and gloomy, taking care to conceal his thoughts, but he had been willing, if not secretly anxious, for advice. Now, gloomier and more taciturn, he kept entirely behind his veil of reserve, affecting to take advice from no one, and, although he still valued Desaix,³ even that General seems to have been kept at a distance. The prestige which had fallen to him with the 'Nord' was at the time supposed to be the cause of this change, but men like Saint-Cyr saw that his weakness as a commander had been augmented rather than diminished.⁴ In his personal habits he had deteriorated, for in 1793 he had been sober and austere; now, or at least at the end of the campaign, he abandoned himself to disgraceful debauches. Once at that period Desaix, having important communications to lay before him, insisted on being admitted to his quarters, only to find his commander in such a state that he himself was ashamed to have entered. Pichegru was furious at being so discovered, and Desaix left, vowing never to set foot in the house again.⁵

¹ See Bourdeau's work commencing, however, a little later in 1795, the first volume only of which is published when I write. (I cannot trace that any more volumes have been published: C. F. P.)

² Phipps, 284.

³ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 85; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 334 note 1.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 177-9; Daudet, *Conjuration*, 25-6.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 333-4; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 62.

What, however, was marvellous was that, in time, he entered into secret negotiations with the enemy for the defeat of his own army and the entry of the Allies into France. The fact, outpassing the fancies of romance-writers, is indubitable, but it is impossible even now to tell how far he was in earnest, or whether he was only playing a double game in order to obtain the money he required for his changed habits. We shall find him committing blunder after blunder, until two such different men as Saint-Cyr and Soult, both considering him incompetent, decided that nothing but treachery could account for his actions. This, however, was for the future: the secret negotiations probably began about August 1795.¹

When Pichegru took up the reins, he held them slackly, living at a village near Strasbourg and visiting his army several times only in the summer of 1795.² He had eleven divisions, seven above Mayence, and the rest blockading that fortress on the left bank.³ With this last body, which was under Schaal, he, like Michaud, seemed little inclined to interfere, and on the two occasions on which he visited it the only direction he gave had ludicrous results. In his campaigns with the 'Nord' he had seen fortresses surrender after a few shells had been thrown into them,⁴ and now he ordered the same plan to be tried on Mayence, though it was held by a real army, not by a small garrison likely to be influenced by the fears of the civilian population. There was some difficulty in getting any officer to undertake such an absurd task, but one of his own A.D.C. was given some howitzers, which were placed in position at night and which were fired at the town. At first the range had been so badly estimated that none of the shells reached their target, and the pieces had to be shifted on succeeding nights: still no shell seemed to touch the town, and Pichegru, convinced at last that he would make himself ridiculous to his own troops, stopped the fire and went up the river.⁵ In June he withdrew Desaix from the blockade, and gave him the command on the Upper Rhine, where later on he

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 551; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 61-3; Daudet, *Conjuration*, 74-87, 109.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 177.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 189.

⁴ e.g., Bois-le-Duc and Venloo, Musset-Pathay, 491-3, 497-505. Venloo even surrendered before the French batteries opened fire.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 187-8. I think this cannot be the somewhat similar incident in which Marmont was concerned.

had personal charge of the *avant-garde*.¹ This was sensible enough, although we shall see that the departure of Desaix had a disastrous effect when the enemy attacked the lines of investment on the 28th October 1795. Savary, promoted Captain on the 26th April 1795, accompanied Desaix as part of his staff.

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 173 and Appendix 101; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 82; Du Casse, i. 267.

L'ARMÉE DE SAMBRE-ET-MEUSE AND L'ARMÉE DE RHIN-ET-MOSELLE

IX

FIRST PHASE OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1795

(April to October 1795)

Jourdan crosses the Rhine and the Lahn. The line of neutrality. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' takes Mannheim. The campaign bungled by Pichegru. Kléber before Mayence. Retirement of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

20th May. Insurrection of 1st Prairial suppressed at Paris.

22nd July. Peace between Spain and France.

21st July. Defeat of the Royalist expedition to Quiberon.

5th October. Insurrection of 13th Vendémiaire suppressed at Paris.

WHEN the divisions of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' employed at Luxembourg had rejoined their army, the positions of the French and Austrians on the Rhine were as follows. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle', under Pichegru, head-quarters at Strasbourg, stretched from Huningue, opposite Bâle, to Bingen. Its nominal strength was 193,000 men, but of these only 96,000 were available.¹ Desaix was on the upper Rhine, having Captain Savary on his staff. In the centre, opposite Mannheim, Davout had a brigade in the division of Dufour. On the left Schaal commanded before Mayence, where Saint-Cyr had a division and where Captain Marmont had joined the siege-train in August 1795. Opposite, on the right bank, was the fiery Wurmser with some 79,000 Austrians, head-quarters at Freiburg,² right resting on Mannheim, left at Lörrach, near Bâle.³ General of Brigade Oudinot, who had been resting to recover from his wound received when with the 'Moselle' in August 1794, was now at the waters of Saint-Amand.

Lower down, on the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', was the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', reinforced by 20,000 men sent from the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 181, Tables 101-2; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 56; Bourdeau, 138 note 1, says in April-May 1795 it had a total of 194,543, of which only 96,997 were present.

² Nearly east of Colmar, Vogel, Atlas xxv.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii, Table 97; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 179.

'Nord', and so some 91,000 strong. Marceau had the right wing from Bingen to Coblenz, two divisions, his own and that of Poncet; in the latter Soult had a brigade, and Colonel Mortier apparently was Adjutant-General.¹ Hatry had the centre, in which Bernadotte led a division, and which stretched from Coblenz to Andernach. Kléber had the most important command, that of the left wing, from Andernach down the river to where Lefebvre, at Nierst,² reached to Büderich,³ and linked with the 'Nord'. Lt.-Colonel Ney was on the staff of Kléber. Opposite Jourdan lay Clairfayt, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, who had some 96,000 men. Mayence, whose garrison of 15,000 men⁴ was included in his force, gave him a splendid bridge-head on the left bank, whence he could issue at any moment. The force immediately opposite Jourdan, including the garrison of Ehrenbreitstein,⁵ was, however, only some 34,000, as the rest of Clairfayt's command lay above the Lahn and so was opposed to Pichegru. Clairfayt's right division, 11,000 strong under the Count von Erbach, guarded the Rhine from the river Wupper, above Düsseldorf, to the Angerbach, below that town.⁶

To any one who believes with me that it is good to study bad as well as skilful campaigns and plans, the operations of 1795 are most interesting; for, while the actions of Jourdan, as far as he had a free hand, were sensible enough, those of Pichegru were like the nightmare of a professor of strategy, and the plans of the *Comité* degenerated into sheer farce. At the end of 1794 Dubois-Crancé, a name dear to Revolutionists, had presented to the *Comité*, of which he was a member, a plan described by him as simple and easy. The Armée du Nord was to invade England on the left bank of the Thames with 60,000 men, whilst the Armée des Pyrénées, made up to 80,000 from La Vendée, landing at Pewentry [*sic*], took Portsmouth, London, and the right bank of the Thames, a diversion being made in Ireland by another body of 20,000. On the Rhine the armies,

¹ *Fastes*, iii. 497: he may have been in the division of Marceau.

² Nierst, nearly opposite Kaiserswerth.

³ Büderich, a little above Wesel, Vogel, Atlas xii.

⁴ See p. 201. Saint-Cyr makes the garrison 22,000 in January and 15,000 on the 1st September.

⁵ Opposite Coblenz.

⁶ *Pajol*, i. 191-4; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 181, Tables 97, 98; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 179. Bourdeau, *Rhin*, 138 note 1, makes the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in August 144,369, of which 101,022 were present.

reinforced from the 'Alpes' to 120,000, were to take the right bank of the river. All this required 440,000 men and 132 vessels of the line. 'This vast plan', says the admiring biographer of Dubois-Crancé, 'was adopted, except in some points of detail.'¹ I take it, however, that it died in virgin simplicity.

Then at the end of April 1795, whilst Luxembourg still detained a large part of Jourdan's army, the *Comité* proposed that Pichegru with the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' should cross the Rhine either at two points near Kehl or else above at Breisach, or below at Oppenheim,² and then march on Mannheim. That place taken, Jourdan with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was to cross at Rheinfels and St. Goar,³ and to land where the Nassau mountains would have left him no room to debouch. Jourdan reported the plan to be impracticable, and either his remonstrances, or the fact that the armies were deficient of all necessities, put an end to this proposal.⁴ Later, after Luxembourg had fallen, a fresh plan was adopted. Carnot had definitely left the *Comité* on the 2nd March 1795,⁵ but Le Tourneur, who soon succeeded to his place in directing the war, was his friend and still worked with him and in his spirit, so that all schemes were sure to be aimed at the flanks of the enemy. Accordingly Pichegru was to cross high up the river at Breisach, before Jourdan; but, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' being ready first, Jourdan determined to strike at once.⁶

Jourdan had no wide field open to him on the right bank, where his operations were bound by the line of neutrality established by Prussia, a dry difficulty, which I have placed in an appendix,⁷ but which may be summarized here as running from Münster nearly due west to the Rhine, then up the right bank of that river to Duisburg. Thence it turned south-east to Werden on the Ruhr, following the Wupper at first but then turning south-east by Altenkirchen and Limburg on the Lahn. It ran on, roughly speaking, parallel to the Rhine, and struck the Main at Höchst, a little below Frankfurt. Thence it went on to the south-east, passing west of Darmstadt to Nordlingen,⁸

¹ Jung, *Dubois-Crancé*, ii. 179-86.

² Between Worms and Mayence, Vogel, Atlas xvii.

³ Half-way between Bingen and Coblenz.

⁴ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 57. ⁵ Ibid., 180-1; *Carnot, par son fils*, ii. 573-4.

⁶ See *Pajol*, i. 181-2.

⁷ Appendix A.

⁸ NW. of Donauwörth, on the Danube, Vogel, xxiii.

where we may leave it. Although Prussia engaged to oppose any troops of an enemy of France crossing this line from the countries outside it, four roads were left open to the troops both of France and of Austria on the right bank of the Main from Frankfurt. Beginning on the east, one road to Cologne ran by Friedberg, Wetzlar on the Lahn, and Siegen, and another on its left by Königstein and Limburg on the Lahn. Another road on the left again led from Frankfurt to Coblenz by Hattersheim, Wiesbaden, and Nassau on the Lahn. Still more on the left, yet another road led down the right bank of the Main by Hattersheim to Mayence. Along these roads, piloted by Prussian officers, both belligerents could march through the neutralized territory.¹ To complicate matters thoroughly, Clairfayt denied that his Court had ever informed him of the existence of this line of neutrality.²

To English readers, accustomed to believe that a country in time of war must either be a belligerent or else preserve its territory inviolate, the way in which rival armies often fought on the Continent over the lands of neutral states is confusing, but a good instance of this sort of warfare will be found in 1796, when Austrians and French fought as they liked over Venetian territory, the neutral of course eventually supplying the spoils. There is something comical in the provision of this long, narrow cockpit in Germany, yet, to the commanders of the time, the line with all the consequent temptations to overstep its limits, wherever good faith was not supported by the presence of a Prussian garrison, was a hard and awkward fact, and its existence repeatedly influenced the campaign. Well might the Representative Merlin de Douai call it an accursed line.³

The line of neutrality affected the very first movements. The right of the force opposite to Kléber rested on the Angerbach, as Erbach, the commander there, believed that the short space between him and Duisburg, lower down the Rhine, was neutral territory, and that this flank could not be turned. It is indeed safe for an army to have a flank thus covered, if the possessor of the neutral territory is willing and able to make his neutrality respected; otherwise, as often happens, such security is vain.

¹ *Pajol*, i. 194-5, 235-6. For Maps see Vogel, xii, xvii, xviii, xxiii.

² Bailleu, 149. Many other difficulties are noticed by Bailleu.

³ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 35.

Jourdan, as I have said, knew how to make use of the Representatives with him, and here was a case of scruples which could be solved by the keepers of his military conscience. It would be convenient to turn Erbach's right by the gap on the neutral ground between him and Duisburg, but, would it be right to do so? Was the neutrality of this space to be respected? 'Certainly not,' replied the Representatives with all due gravity: 'it is true that it is part of the defined limits, depending on the Duchy of Berg, but its owner, the Elector Palatine, has not withdrawn from the coalition, and he cannot therefore claim the benefit of the neutrality.'¹ As happy as Mahomet when he had beckoned down his angel, Jourdan now drew up his plans with a clear conscience. While Hatry with the centre was to make great demonstrations and also real preparations for a crossing at Neuwied, Kléber with the left wing was actually to cross below Düsseldorf, on the 'non-neutral' ground, and to turn Erbach's right. Then, marching up the river between it and the neutral line, he was to clear the right bank until the centre and right could cross at Neuwied and at Coblenz.²

I do not think that Jourdan has ever been given full credit for his successful passages of the Rhine, and that which he now accomplished is worth studying in detail.³ No doubt he was worthily seconded by Kléber, but the plan was his own. On the 18th August he assembled what I may call his three corps-commanders, Marceau, Hatry, and Kléber, at Cologne to give them his last instructions:⁴ the plan had been already communicated to the critical Kléber, who approved, writing to Gillet, 'You speak of my plan: Jourdan has communicated his to me: there is nothing to add to it.' Kléber, when offered reinforcements, had accepted, asking for a man at their head, 'intent on his business, understanding my language, on whom I can count with perfect security, and who will be capable of transmitting to his troops the electric spark I shall flash into his heart. . . . You will understand at once that it is of Bernadotte I speak, my dear Jourdan,' and Kléber meant him to have led the wing

¹ *Pajol*, i. 202-3; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 181-2.

² *Pajol*, i. 196-209; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 182.

³ *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 150-83; *Pajol*, i. 207-37; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 177-87; Soult, i. 243-8; Lahure, 102-5; Vogel, xii and xvii; and Baedeker's *Rhine*, p. 58 for Neuwied, and p. 18 for Hamm.

⁴ *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 159, 176.

across the river. Once over, he would send the General back.¹ Jourdan, however, retained Bernadotte with his own division of the centre at Neuwied.

Preparations for crossing were made at three places : for the left wing, just above Düsseldorf, opposite Hamm, and also below, at Ürdingen, between Düsseldorf and Duisburg ; for the centre at Neuwied, below Coblenz, a point used several times for this purpose in this and succeeding campaigns, where an island and a salient curve of the river gave the facilities loved by engineers.² Boats and pontoons had to be provided, those for Ürdingen being brought partly by land and partly up the river from Holland, and for a month the men were exercised in managing them.³ The enemy on the right bank were on the alert and were entrenching themselves, while the Prussians, guarding the line of neutrality, and holding Duisburg, were careful in their watch, so that the boats hired by Kléber at Duisburg were by an odd scruple prohibited from crossing to the left bank without freights, and had to be laden with oil purchased for the purpose. Well might Kléber recommend Jourdan to apply another time for mountains of gold. A floating bridge, coming down the Moselle, was fortunately got past Ehrenbreitstein to Neuwied in safety.⁴

At last all was ready, though there was a difficulty about one of the leading Generals of the left wing. 'I say nothing to you about Lefebvre,' wrote Kléber to Jourdan ; 'he is a sick man, whom it is necessary to cajole from morning to evening.'⁵ To any one knowing the characters of the two men the idea of Kléber 'cajoling' Lefebvre is amusing : a rhinoceros cajoling a buffalo ! On the 5th September 1795, at nine o'clock at night, both Jourdan and Kléber came to direct the operation personally, and Lefebvre began crossing the river, but he was still in want of cajoling, and, on a Representative's becoming alarmed as the moon was shining, he told him angrily, in language impossible to quote, to cover it and let his division pass.⁶ The wing got over eventually, Düsseldorf was occupied, and Erbach, forced back on the neutral line, to which he was followed by Colonel Ney at the head of the advanced guard, was so embar-

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 173.

² Baedeker, *Rhine*, 58.

³ Lahure, 105.

⁴ Lejeune, 16-17.

⁵ Pajol, *Kléber*, 170.

⁶ Roguet, iii. 450, with wrong date.

passed that he went over the boundary. The Prussians protested strongly, and he returned to Solingen : here Ney met him, but had to draw off, and Erbach succeeded in gaining Frankfurt. Kléber swept on up the right bank, Ney, now quite in his element, leading with his body of *éclaireurs*. When abreast of Cologne the force was joined by Morlot's division from the left bank.¹ The 8th division (Colaoud, late Grenier) had been left at Düsseldorf, where Jourdan prudently prepared an entrenched camp to secure his hold on the right bank : a precaution most useful to him later.²

There was plenty of fighting. While Erbach was scurrying for Frankfurt, Kléber was pressing Werneck back to the Sieg. Frenchmen were once again fighting Frenchmen, for Ney on the 8th September met two *émigré* squadrons under the Prince de Rohan, and it was not till the third charge that he forced them over the Wupper and gained the bridge of Opladen.³ On the 13th he again drove in Rohan's troops from the outposts and found Werneck standing at Hennef on the Sieg, in a position strengthened by redoubts.⁴ Ney found fords over the river, and here a plan was adopted by which the cavalry was sent to turn the redoubts and enter them by the gorges, while Lefebvre held the enemy in front. This plan proved successful, and Werneck retired on Altenkirchen.⁵ Lefebvre was pushed on, and by a turning movement under Ney once more drove the Austrians off. By the 15th September the bank of the Rhine opposite Neuwied was clear of the enemy, and Hatry crossed with the divisions of Bernadotte, Poncet, and Marceau.

As the enemy was retiring rapidly, Jourdan determined to advance until opposite Mayence, and on the 20th and 21st the army crossed the Lahn, Bernadotte on the extreme right at Nassau, Poncet at Diez, with Championnet, Grenier, and Tilly farther left, and Lefebvre on the extreme left at Wetzlar. Marceau's division was left to blockade Ehrenbreitstein, and Colaoud's at Düsseldorf.⁶ There were long defiles to be passed, the river banks were steep and the left bank strengthened with redoubts ; the bridges had been destroyed and the fords

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 178-82 ; *Pajol*, i. 207-25 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 182-6 ; Ney, i. 81-4.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 187.

³ *Pajol*, i. 223.

⁴ NE. of Bonn, Vogel, xvii.

⁵ *Pajol*, i. 226-30 ; Ney, i. 85-7. Bittard des Portes seems to omit this campaign.

⁶ *Pajol*, i. 230-4 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 186-7.

obstructed. Soult's brigade led the way by a ford believed by the enemy to be impracticable, and his brother, Pierre Soult, now his A.D.C.,¹ dashed into the river and with a small party held on to the left bank until supported by the rest of the brigade. But the ford was narrow and those that missed it were drowned, so that the enthusiasm of the troops threw them into some confusion. Seeing that the cavalry were off the line, Pierre Soult dashed back to direct them. He arrived just as General Klein, who commanded the cavalry, had fallen back from the bank with his horse, and was drowning. Pierre swam out and rescued him, a feat for which he afterwards received a flattering letter from the Government. As soon as the second brigade got over, Soult led his men on Diez and captured it with the bayonet, taking many prisoners.² Lower down Bernadotte had taken Nassau in the same style.³ Jourdan's next step was to close his army round Kastel, and thus to blockade Mayence on the right bank as the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' blockaded it on the left bank. Kléber was given the important command of the right and centre of the army (Bernadotte, Poncet, Championnet, and Grenier), while Hatry commanded the left (Tilly and Lefebvre). By the 29th September the army was disposed from Mosbach, below Mayence, to the Liederbach, a little below Höchst, the point where the line of neutrality cut the Main, leaving Frankfurt neutralized. The line of the Main was thus guarded from any attack by Clairfayt from the north.⁴

The long advance up the right bank of the Rhine had put up the whole covey of Princes and former sovereigns: rising from their Capitals or their refuges, they flew for Prussian shelter behind the line of neutrality. The Elector of Saxony, pleading his own danger, withdrew his troops from the Austrian army.⁵ Prussia, in receiving these Princelets into her net, practically forced them to make peace with France. Her attitude was not dignified, but even the slight protection she afforded them now may have been one of the steps by which she obtained her eventual position in Germany.

¹ He was to be with the Marshal as a cavalry general in Spain, and he commanded a cavalry division at Waterloo.

² Soult, i. 248-50.

³ *Pajol*, i. 233-5; Vogel, xvii, xviii.

⁴ *Pajol*, i. 238-40; see Soult, i. 279-82, for Jourdan's orders of the 9th October 1795; Vogel, xvii, xviii; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas i and vii; Baedeker, *Rhine*, 208.

⁵ Rambaud, 286-7.

The line of neutrality had produced its inevitable troubles, and Lefebvre, marching close to the forbidden edge, had the greatest share in them. When he first landed on the right bank of the Rhine he had to request a Prussian post to retire out of range: at Wetzlar he found a Prussian garrison. Then the Prussians claimed to receive stores brought in by a French reconnaissance across the Lahn, on the ground that they were prizes taken in neutral territory. Kléber, however, alleged that the enemy had been the first to disregard the line, and the Prussians gave way:¹ indeed they were anxious to show every courtesy to the French, as will be seen from the curious correspondence between Hatry and Prince Hohenlohe,² though some of their officers seem actually to have tried to insist on the French troops' encamping on the roads, a contention disallowed by Hohenlohe.³

There had been a curious outbreak of indiscipline amongst the men of Kléber's wing when they had first reached the right bank: matters became so bad that all the Generals, including not only Kléber, but even Jourdan, had threatened to resign if the *Comité* did not alter the law by which all serious crimes had to be dealt with, not by courts wherever the troops happened to be, but by a military tribunal sitting at Aix-la-Chapelle, so that, in order to bring to justice a third of the army, another third would have been required as escort.⁴ The fighting and the triumphal march had rectified much of this trouble, and the army, comparatively well fed and supplied, presented a striking contrast to the troops of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' round Mayence. It is only after reading of the sufferings of the unfortunate blockading force that one can appreciate the feelings with which Saint-Cyr, who went over the river to see Kléber, and Marmont, who looked on from the left bank, regarded what Saint-Cyr calls the superb troops, and Marmont the magnificent spectacle, of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', as led by Jourdan.⁵

Meanwhile, farther up the river, Fortune, who had been for long so kind to Pichegru, now gave him the last of her favours. The *tête-de-pont* which Mannheim had held on the left bank had, as we have seen, capitulated to the French on the 25th

¹ *Pajol*, i. 215, 233, 235, 236; Soult, ii. 272-9.

² Soult, i. 272-9.

³ *Ibid.*, 278; *Pajol*, 236.

⁴ *Pajol*, i. 225-6.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 198; Marmont, i. 71.

December 1794 on condition that Mannheim itself was not to be bombarded from the left bank, unless the war were carried over to the right bank, as was now the case. Pichegru had intended to cross at Oppenheim when Jourdan had got over, and it was for that purpose that he had brought Desaix up the river from Mayence, to give him command of the body of troops he meant to throw over, but the collection of the troops and the arrival of Desaix had put the enemy on their guard. Now, however, Ambert's and Dufour's divisions were sent from before Mayence to attack Mannheim. The Austrians had neglected to put any of their troops in the place, and the Palatine troops had little interest in holding it. Pichegru had established some communications with the inhabitants, and the place was surrendered on a simple summons on the 20th September 1795.¹

The possession of Mannheim gave Pichegru a *tête-de-pont* on the right bank at the happiest moment, for, when Clairfayt had heard that Jourdan was across at Düsseldorf, he had left his quarters at Gross-Gerau² and had marched north across the Main, intending to defend the Lahn against the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. He had left Quasdanowich to defend the Neckar, and had called on Wurmser above him at Freiburg to come down with the troops on the upper Rhine and help him.³ Consequently Pichegru had an opening on the right bank almost clear of any large body of the enemy, if he at once used his chance of cutting off Wurmser from Clairfayt. The opportunity was the more tempting because, right in front of Mannheim, only some fifteen miles up the Neckar, was Heidelberg, where Clairfayt's stores now lay an easy prey.⁴ Besides the two divisions already at Mannheim (Ambert and Dufour), with the cavalry reserve of Forest, probably some 10,000 strong, Pichegru had some 40,000 men under Desaix on the Upper Rhine, all of whom could have been poured across at Mannheim,⁵ and even part of the body blockading Mayence might have been used in time. Clairfayt, the moment he heard of the capture of Mann-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 173, 189-90, 488-91, with plan of Mannheim, p. 389; *Pajol*, i. 242-3 note 1; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 188-9.

² Between Darmstadt and Mayence, Vogel, xviii.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 187-8.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 191; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 193.

⁵ For comparison see the state of these forces in October, Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Tables 100, 101.

heim, had at once realized his danger and, abandoning the hope of driving back Jourdan, he had recrossed the Main, but on the 24th had only reached Heppenheim,¹ and could not have got up in time.²

The capture of Mannheim could not have been an unexpected boon to Pichegru, who was well aware of the possibilities which his success there would give him. Although Jomini represents him as intent on a second passage at Kehl or Huningue, far up the river away from Jourdan,³ he himself informed the *Comité* that he was preparing to cross at Oppenheim, not far above Mayence, partly to make a diversion to the threatening attitude of the enemy on the Upper Rhine; but this would be subordinated to the opening of the gates of Mannheim, where he was ordering his bridge equipage to halt. Then, when he had got the place, he told the *Comité* that this put him in a position to intercept the left of the Austrians from their right, which was chasing Jourdan, and he would send as many troops as possible over to the right bank to cut off Clairfayt from Wurmser.⁴ This was a perfectly proper view of the circumstances, and the more creditable as the *Comité* was sending him a grandiose plan for surrounding the 150,000 troops of the enemy.⁵ Had he acted in the spirit in which he wrote, he would have deserved nothing but praise. And, as if to mark his sense of the situation, he placed his own head-quarters at his new conquest.⁶

Pichegru did, it is true, strike at Heidelberg, but only late and in a half-hearted manner. By the evening of the 21st September he had the two divisions at Mannheim, and within a long day's march he had another division, a brigade, and his cavalry reserve.⁷

On the 23rd the advance really began, but instead, as Jomini says, and as common sense dictated, of sending the force up the left bank of the Neckar, on which both Mannheim and Heidelberg stood, so as to use its full strength and to have its left flank covered, he split up the body, pushing Dufour's division up the right bank and Ambert's, in which Davout had a brigade, up the left. A brigade brought up from the 5th Division covered

¹ East of Worms, Vogel, xxiii.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 192-3.

³ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁴ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 52-3, 57; Bourdeau, *Pichegru*, 31, 35.

⁵ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 190-1.

⁶ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 57, 154.

⁷ Bourdeau, *Pichegru*, 38-9.

the right of Ambert. Then, instead of taking command himself, Pichegru entrusted the task to Ambert, who seems only to have known at 7 p.m. on the 23rd September that he was to concert operations with the other commander, Dufour. Also Ambert did not know the real position of his troops, as Davout had pushed so far forward that he was already occupying the ground for which Ambert believed he would have to fight next day.

The enemy hitherto had drawn back, but the French were only some 10,000 strong,¹ and the troops were worn by long marches, whilst from the hills the Austrians could realize the situation. On the 24th September 1795 Quasdanowich massed in front of Dufour on the right of the Neckar with commendable vigour, broke the division, and hunted it back. It could not have got to Mannheim, had it not found a ford by which it got over the Neckar under the protection of Ambert's troops, after losing many prisoners, including Dufour himself. Meanwhile Davout, leading the advance of Ambert on the left bank, had been engaged before Wieblingen, but he had no guns to enable him to support Dufour, and Ambert's division had to retreat to Mannheim. Clairfayt was once more in touch with Wurmser, and now could prepare to attack Jourdan and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in front of Kastel or Mayence.²

Pichegru now brought Desaix down from the Upper Rhine to command at Mannheim.³ Here we again meet Oudinot, who on the 2nd October was called up by Pichegru to take a brigade in the 6th Division (where Davout was serving), and was placed at Neckerau.⁴ When Ambert fell ill on the 16th October, Pichegru placed Oudinot, as senior General,⁵ in temporary command of the division, and, to please him, because he was a general favourite, not only allowed him to retain the title of Governor of Trèves, but also directed the guard of his headquarters to be taken by the 4th Regiment, which he had for-

¹ Bourdeau, *Pichegru*, 41 note 2.

² Ibid., 35-49, with plan; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 191-5; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 191-3; Daudet, *Conjuration*, 58-9; Curély, 106-7.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 195.

⁴ Close to and south-east of Mannheim.

⁵ Oudinot had been promoted General of Brigade by the Representatives on the 14th June 1794, and this had been confirmed on the 13th June 1795. Davout, who had refused the rank of General of Division in August 1793, ranked as General of Brigade from the date of his recall to the army, 24th September 1794.

merly commanded.¹ The two divisions, Ambert and Dusirat, late Dufour, with Forest's cavalry reserve, some 12,979 strong, remained in front of Mannheim on the right bank.²

The folly of throwing a weak force on a line so important for the enemy to maintain, and the blundering way in which the attempt had been made, were so evident, that this expedition has been used as one of the proofs of the treachery of Pichegru. M. le Capitaine Bourdeau with justice has combated this charge.³ Pichegru quite understood that the blow at Heidelberg ought to follow the capture of Mannheim at once, and he would have delayed the summons to the place till his bridge was ready, but the Representative Merlin took the matter into his own hands. Here Pichegru was blameless. Then he was afraid to draw troops from either flank lest the Austrians should themselves cross to the left of the Rhine and attack him in the absence of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. To dread that Clairfayt in his retirement before Jourdan would attack through Mayence was absurd, and he could well have weakened his left wing. As for his right, it was true that Wurmser, before Jourdan's advance, had tried to plan a crossing of the Rhine. This was found too difficult, but in any case it was obvious that a French crossing in force at Mannheim would either have recalled Wurmser, or would have made him abandon the project, because communication between the two Austrian armies would have been cut, and it would have been madness for Wurmser to keep troops on the left bank of the Rhine. Such risk as there was of a counter-stroke was one that must be taken by any commander aiming a blow at his adversary. The Directory may have been partly responsible, but the blame must fall on Pichegru. As for his not taking command himself, that, as Captain Bourdeau remarks, is in complete accordance with his usual course, witness his conduct with the Armée du Nord. He was a slack, incapable commander.

I now return to Jourdan, who stood, victorious but anxious, opposite Mayence. If he had known it, this was the culminating point of his career. He had fought his way steadily from Charleroi, throwing the Austrians back, until he now stood on the right bank of the Rhine, with every prospect of forcing them from the river and, Mayence won, of thus ending the war. He

¹ Nolle, 10-11. ² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii, Table 102. ³ Bourdeau, *Pichegru*.

would have stood high in the list of commanders, although he would never have been Marshal, for peace at this time would have closed Bonaparte's path to the throne. The turn which now took place in his fortunes was caused by no fault of his own. The situation was a very curious and interesting one, well deserving study : in fact this campaign presents so many points that it might serve as a text for a variety of problems.

Taking the position of the different forces from south to north, Wurmser was coming down the Rhine ready to crush any weak force that might venture out of Mannheim, and it was a weak French force, already defeated by Quasdanowich, that was timidly holding the place as a *tête-de-pont* on the right bank. Between Mannheim and Mayence was Clairfayt, relieved for the moment from anxiety for his rear at Mannheim, and preparing to strike at Jourdan, who was halted in front of Kastel, unable to move up the river, because he would have had to weaken himself by leaving a force to blockade Mayence on the right bank. Down below him he had points of passage at Neuwied and at Düsseldorf, while Marceau was rather wasted in the blockade of Ehrenbreitstein. The sally-port of Kastel was closed to the Austrians for the moment by Jourdan's position in front of it, but if Clairfayt could drive the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' down the river he would at once have a *débouché* on the left bank, opposed only by four divisions of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', under Schaal, who communicated freely with Jourdan, and on whom, as we shall see, that commander could draw for reinforcements. Far up the river on the left bank were the first five divisions of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', with Rivaud's cavalry reserve, some 49,000 strong, which could be used to cross the Rhine above, or, far better, at Mannheim.

The loss or blockade of Mannheim would only prevent the French debouching from it, but, if Jourdan were forced back down the river, the Austrians could pass through Mayence and, reinforced by the strong garrison there, attack the French on the left bank, before the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' could re-cross below, either at Neuwied or Düsseldorf, to support the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. If the French were successful on the right bank, the Austrian garrison of Mayence was so much loss to Clairfayt. Victory almost certainly lay with the side which first used its means of crossing, and, while the French not only had Jourdan's

'Sambre-et-Meuse' on the right bank, but also actually held a bridge-head at Mannheim, they had the power to debouch in force and to cut the Austrians in half. The Austrians, to be able to do the same, had first to force Jourdan away from Kastel, and then, an easier task, to break the investment on the left bank.

The *Comité* had formed a plan for the junction of the two armies near Miltenberg,¹ by sending Jourdan up the Main, and Pichegru towards the Upper Neckar, but it treated this as a secondary matter; Pichegru was first to restore the free navigation of the Rhine, to threaten the enemy's rear by a passage at Huningue, and to take Philippsburg.² If the junction were made, then Pichegru was to command both armies, as already decreed.³ Later, on the 26th September, yet more marvellous instructions were sent. If the Austrians had not abandoned the territory of Hesse-Darmstadt, the armies of Jourdan and Pichegru might surround them in the peninsula formed by the Rhine, the Main, and the Neckar, and, reducing them by famine, at last offer them such a capitulation as that of Klosterseven in 1757, by which the Duke of Cumberland had been forced to disband his army of Hessians, Saxons, and Brunswickers. The only fear of the *Comité* was lest this certain success should be thrown away by any rashness. Consequently it was of the greatest importance not to hazard any battle: 'The impetuosity of the French, their impatience for Victory, make it a duty of the *Comité* to insist specially on this plan. The battles of Poitiers, Azincourt, and many others of which the world recalls the circumstances, are melancholy examples of the danger of adopting contrary measures.'⁴ Did I not say that the plans of the *Comité* degenerated into sheer farce? This was most excellent fooling, but it was such advisers and such plans that are believed to have sent the armies of the Republic to victory. To Jourdan these instructions must have seemed a bad dream, but if so, the awakening was at hand.

Not knowing the intentions of Pichegru, Jourdan demanded an interview, and a meeting of the two commanders and the Representatives took place at Ober-Ingelheim, the headquarters of the French blockading force on the left bank, on the 4th

¹ On the Main, south-east of Mayence, north-east of Mannheim, Vogel, xxiii.

² Above Speyer.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 360-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 364-7; *Pajol*, i. 244.

October 1795. The conference was long, for the differences between the commanders were serious. Jourdan, who thoroughly understood the situation, urged that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' should debouch by Mannheim on the right bank and join him, but neither Pichegru nor the Representatives were able to realize the danger, and only saw that Mayence was at last completely invested and that the siege of it could be begun: indeed Pichegru had already ordered the place to be summoned and active operations against it to be pressed. Jourdan's plan was referred to the *Comité*, meanwhile Mannheim was to be used to threaten the enemy, and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', remaining on the Main, was not to penetrate into Germany until Mayence and Ehrenbreitstein were taken. Saint-Cyr, who ought to know, says that there was no question about the plan of crossing between Strasbourg and Huningue, which, strangely enough, he was in favour of. One point Jourdan carried, for he insisted that, if he were to invest Mayence on the right bank, the command of all the troops round it must be given to him; otherwise he and Kléber would both retire. Pichegru in the end gave way, and the four divisions of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' on the left bank passed temporarily under Jourdan's orders, much to the disgust of one officer with them, Captain Marmont, who was as hot for his army as if he had been with it for years.¹ Thoroughly dissatisfied, and despairing of the situation, Jourdan rejoined his army, putting Kléber in command of the investment of the place on both banks.²

Here the question of the superior command of the two armies may be discussed. It was generally believed that Pichegru had been appointed Commander-in-Chief if the armies met, although Saint-Cyr was doubtful on the point.³ When Pichegru came to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', Moreau succeeding him with the 'Nord' in April 1795, the *Comité* decided that, if the three armies 'Rhin-et-Moselle', 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and 'Nord' were joined, Pichegru was to be the Commander-in-Chief, and to have Jourdan and Moreau under his orders. In reality Jourdan was the senior, and he had Wattignies and Fleurus to his credit, while Pichegru could not be said to have won any fight in person,

¹ *Pajol*, i. 247; *Pajol, Kléber*, 101; *Jomini, Rév.*, vii. 196; *Saint-Cyr, Rhin*, ii. 194-6; *Soult*, i. 253; *Marmont*, i. 140-1; *Daudet, Conjuraton*, 35-6.

² *Pajol, Kléber*, 184.

³ *Saint-Cyr, Rhin*, ii. 181-2.

but he was much in favour at the time. Now, when the two armies, 'Rhin-et-Moselle' and 'Sambre-et-Meuse', were actually joining hands, the *Comité* properly enough considered that one General should command, and it nominated Pichegru, whilst expressing to Jourdan its hope, 'that the disinterestedness of the great citizen would stifle in him the susceptibilities of the soldier'. Pichegru, however, declined. He informed the *Comité* that, whilst the concert and good understanding which had always existed between him and Jourdan still lasted, he thought it would be impolitic to give the command to one man; but, if the *Comité* persisted, he declared that they must think of some other person for a command that was beyond his own powers. This sounds magnanimous, but one cannot but believe that he shrank from the difficult position he would have been in if Jourdan and Kléber had gone, as they had threatened, and left him practically to exercise the direct command of both armies. The *Comité* gave way.¹

Jourdan, as I have said, had no illusions about his position on the Main: it was strong enough against a direct attack, even if Clairfayt were left unmolested by Pichegru, but the safety of his left flank depended on the Austrians' observing the line of neutrality. They had already accused him of overstepping the boundary when he had crossed below Düsseldorf (though the Prussians had not complained),² so that they were not in the humour to be balked themselves by any delicacy of conscience: indeed Clairfayt had already written to Hohenlohe, the Prussian commander, a letter pretty significant of his intentions.³ One of Jourdan's difficulties was Frankfurt. If he could have occupied it, then he might have held in front of Mayence, disregarding any threat to his left, but not only was it a free city of the Empire, well within the neutral line, but, what practically was more important, it was occupied by a Prussian garrison, so that no kind Representative with a new text would avail for its seizure.⁴ In reality he had the right of passage through it, and Hohenlohe was wrong in refusing it.⁵

To guard against the danger that the enemy might pass the Main on the neutral ground just above Höchst and turn the left, Lefebvre had been ordered in that case to seize Höchst and,

¹ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 104-6. ² Bailleu, 30, 149-50. ³ Soult, i. 278-9.

⁴ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 199.

⁵ Bailleu, 30.

wheeling his men so as to be *en potence* at right angles to the front, to hold Kronberg, at the southern foot of the Taunus range, and to line the Westerbach, which runs into the Nidda between Rödelheim and Höchst.¹ But no special strengthening of the left seems to have been made, and, that flank once turned, Jourdan's position would have been most precarious, for on his right he had to deal with the Mayence garrison, who on the 3rd October had come out of Kastel and found full occupation for the divisions of Bernadotte and Championnet, and for the artillery and one of Poncet's brigades.² He could draw troops across the river from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' blockading force, and he did bring over one division, the 11th (Renauld), on the 11th October,³ but the Representatives probably would have objected to withdrawing more, even supposing he could have fed them. These divisions belonged to another army, and he would be bound to leave them if he retreated, in which case their presence would be only a drag on him.

It was not merely the pressure of the enemy which Jourdan dreaded. The line of neutrality prevented his drawing supplies from the fertile country in front; and, if he were to be cut off from Coblenz and Cologne by a turning movement round his left, he could depend only on two bridges thrown over the Rhine near Mayence. Want of pontoons and of boats made him unable himself to cross the Main and to strike at Clairfayt; consequently, if turned, all he could do was to swing his army round with its back to Mayence and to the lively garrison of Kastel, in which position he would have no supplies but what he could draw from the left bank, already stripped by the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Even as it was, his troops were almost starving and were petitioning the Convention for redress from the functionaries to whom they attributed their misery. While urging an advance at the beginning of the campaign, the Government had failed to supply either proper supply trains, or bridge equipages, and the army now suffered in consequence.⁴

A fine movement was open to him, on paper, if he could cross the Main, for, as soon as Clairfayt had got well to the north of

¹ See Jourdan's orders in case of attack, Soult, i. 279-82; Vogel, xvii-xviii.

² Pajol, i. 246-7; Soult, i. 231.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 187; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 198, 493.

⁴ Jourdan, *Rév.*, vii. 197-8; Pajol, i. 247.

him, he could march up the right bank for Mannheim, and so make his junction with Pichegru, but such operations across the rear of an enemy advancing to strike, although constantly forming day-dreams for critics,¹ are seldom attempted, and here again supplies would have failed even if pontoons had been available. Still, it is a tempting picture to imagine Clairfayt delivering his blow in the air, only to find himself below the two French armies united at Mannheim. Had he then crossed at Mayence, the situation would have been perfect, but the advantage would have been on the side of the French. They would themselves have been massed,² whilst they cut off the Austrian troops above and at Mannheim from Clairfayt, and they could have threatened the Austrian communications with the Danube whilst covering their own. These, however, are but dreams, and we have to return to facts.

As for the support to be expected from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', that was nought, whether Pichegru was already benumbed by treason, or was acting in good faith. On this point we may hear Hoche, who always believed that at the relief of Landau in 1793 Pichegru, with the 'Rhin', had hung back until the 'Moselle' had cleared the way, and had then claimed the credit. After the failure on the Neckar, Debelle, Hoche's brother-in-law, had written to him about 'the unfortunate event' which had befallen the army, and Hoche, then in La Vendée, commanding the two armies 'Ouest' and 'Brest', had replied on the 19th October, not knowing exactly to what Debelle referred, 'The Armée du Rhin is always the same, doing nothing, never wishing to profit by the success of others. It is a great carcass, wanting a soul and motive power.' He had begun by a sharper criticism, 'I own to you that in general your operations, admired by Europe, are not according to common sense. The position of the army is false, and, if I were in the place of Clairfayt, you would have to swim across the Rhine.'³ Clairfayt, however, as we shall see, knew his work pretty well and, if Pichegru did not have to swim the Rhine, it was because he himself remained on the left

¹ E.g. the plan for a march of Bazaine's army in 1870 from Metz southwards across the German communications, Hamley, *Operations*, pp. 328-32 of the 1873 edition.

² Except for the division of Marceau blockading Ehrenbreitstein, and detachments at Düsseldorf, &c.

³ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 180-1; Rousselin, ii. 226-7.

bank. There he stuck ; any dash over the river, even high up, that might recall Clairfayt was not to be hoped for from him, and this Jourdan knew. Small wonder that he wished to resign and pleaded his health as a reason. Kléber was ready to follow his example, and believed that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' would in that case probably be amalgamated with the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.¹ If that had happened, and Pichegru had remained in command, Clairfayt would have had the French at his mercy. The *Comité* soothed Jourdan, for they had no other commander and they pinned their faith on him and on that broken reed, Pichegru.

Jourdan did what he could, but he could not have hoped to be able to hold his ground. At Mayence Kléber was groaning over his 'wretched and pitiable command'. The blockading force, of which he had taken command on the 6th October, consisted of his own two divisions (Bernadotte and Championnet) on the right bank, and on the left bank the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th Divisions of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' (Courtot or Courtois, Saint-Cyr, Mengaud, and Renauld or Reneauld). The 8th and 9th were under Saint-Cyr and the 10th and 11th under Mengaud ; the whole four being commanded by Schaal. Altogether he had on the right bank some 18,000 men, and on the left bank 27,000 of whom only 21,000 were combatants.² On the ground that it was awkward to have the former commander under him, Kléber asked Jourdan that Schaal should be removed, and in one way or another this caused unpleasantness ; for instance, Schaal's staff refused to join Kléber.³ This led to Kléber's appealing to Jourdan to recall him : he had undertaken the duty only out of friendship to his chief, in whose army these difficulties did not occur ; he would not continue to command the four divisions of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', were he to be arrested, bound, or even guillotined. Jourdan knew his man, and probably let the growl go. Anyhow Kléber got rid of part of his trouble by nominating Saint-Cyr to command on the left bank. Saint-Cyr of course declined, but Kléber was experienced in resignations and Saint-Cyr had to act.⁴

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 196, 566.

² Ibid., 196-7 ; Pajol, *Kléber*, 183-5 ; Pajol, i. 245-8.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 514.

⁴ Ibid., 195-7 ; Pajol, *Kléber*, 182-7 ; Pajol, i. 248-9.

Kléber had found nothing really ready for the siege: two bridges, one above and another below the town, he considered were required to make the situation less precarious; besides it was now evident that the fate of Mayence was to be settled on the right bank, where the enemy, concentrating from above and below, was about to attack Jourdan. If the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' were forced to retreat, Kastel on the right bank would be unblocked and the old hopeless situation restored; consequently Kléber ordered all siege and active operations on the left bank to be suspended. It was evident that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was riding at single anchor, ready to slip off, although some of its Generals in the right wing did not understand the danger. On the 11th October Kléber informed Saint-Cyr that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' would be attacked next day on the Main by the enemy, and that Jourdan had directed one of the divisions of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', that of Renauld, to be brought over to the right bank, which, as I have said, was done. Anxious about his own fate, Saint-Cyr went over to see Kléber, and found the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' ready for battle and confident in itself, whilst Renauld was blockading Kastel in order to set all Jourdan's troops free. The position of the army Saint-Cyr thought excellent as long as the enemy did not disregard the line of neutrality and turn its left. But the sagacious man felt sure that the Austrians would not respect the boundary. Marmont, with less experience, foresaw the same danger. Returning to his command, Saint-Cyr, although under Kléber, wrote to Pichegru for instructions. Full of *esprit de corps*, he had been rather shocked at the abrupt manner in which Kléber had ordered the discontinuance of siege-work, wise though he himself thought that decision. Now he had a well-founded belief that, if the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' were driven back down the Rhine, he would be left to his own devices, and might even lose Renauld's division, so he asked for orders, but got little help from his commander's counsels.¹

As was expected, Clairfayt, once certain that Wurmser was on his way down the right bank to support him, and that Pichegru might be trusted not to debouch from Mannheim, struck southwards at Jourdan. Utterly disregarding the line

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 197-201, 491-504; Pajol, *Kléber*, 184-7; Marmont, i. 140.

of neutrality, he crossed the Main on the 10th October at Seligenstadt and Offenbach; next day, marching north, he crossed the Nidda at Vilbel,¹ north-east of Frankfurt, so that he would soon have been in rear of Lefebvre. Jourdan, prepared to stand against a frontal attack, saw his rear and his communications threatened, and at once called a council of war, which declared for retreat to the Lahn. Renault's division was sent back to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' on the 12th October. Then, lighting large fires, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' set off down the river and by the 14th October was behind the Lahn. Clairfayt's columns had as short a route, if not shorter, and reached Wetzlar and Weilburg, even passing the Lahn at the latter point and threatening Lefebvre, who, however, forced them back on the 15th October.²

Meanwhile, on the 12th October, Saint-Cyr was listening to the sounds of heavy fighting on the other bank, showing that Kléber's prophecy was being fulfilled, but the first news he got of the result was a letter from General Neu, the governor of Mayence, written in intentionally insulting terms, and saying that, as he did not know what had become of the French army of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which had fled in all directions, so that it was impossible to catch it, he sent over some of its non-combatants, who had not been able to follow, and who had been found by the Austrian patrols on roads covered by broken wagons and carts. In reality it was Schaal whom the governor had meant to annoy, in revenge for the terms in which that General had summoned the place lately and, when he heard from Saint-Cyr in reply, he explained his mistake. Saint-Cyr himself at first did not believe in the news, but in time he heard from Renault that at eight at night on the 12th he had been ordered back across the river, and that any of his troops that could not get over were to join Bernadotte's division, which with the rest of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was in full retreat down the Rhine. Saint-Cyr now had an anxious time, watching for Renault's division, but it had not been followed by the enemy, and, crossing by detachments, by the 15th October it was back in its place on the left.³

¹ Vogel, xviii.

² *Pajol*, i. 250-1; Soult, i. 259-60; Jomini, *Rév.*, ii. 200-1.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 202-5; 497-500.

So far the conduct of Jourdan was beyond criticism, and the sagacious Saint-Cyr had foreseen the retreat.¹ The army was now in a strong position and in touch with the division of Marceau, which gave a reinforcement of some 10,000 men, while more might have been brought up from Düsseldorf: Saint-Cyr even believed that Clairfayt would not have attacked on the Lahn, but the Austrian was in an enterprising humour, and I doubt his having been likely to stop short at this moment if, as now, he could have struck Jourdan without getting too far from Pichegru. All this time he was moving northwards on Wetzlar and Weilburg, disregarding the line of neutrality, which cut the Lahn at Weilburg, so as again to turn Jourdan's left. The morale of the troops may have suffered from the retreat, the first backward movement after such long-continued triumphs, and famine was on the army.² On the 17th October Jourdan again retired in order to regain all his former positions along the left bank of the river. Kléber, with the divisions of Marceau, Bernadotte, and Championnet, crossed at Neuwied on the 19th and 20th October, after running some risks, as related in the next paragraph: Grenier with his own division and that of Poncet passed at Bonn, and Tilly at Cologne, whilst Lefebvre, on the extreme left, remained on the right bank in the entrenched camp by Düsseldorf. By the 21st October the whole army, except Lefebvre, was on the left bank, much in its old camps, but still holding a bridge-head at Neuwied and another in the entrenched camp at Düsseldorf. Marceau was again sent to Coblenz.³

One incident of this retreat shows us the same side of the impulsive Marceau's character as we have seen when he was ready to blow out his brains before Charleroi in despair at the rout of his men. When he had evacuated his lines of investment before Ehrenbreitstein, he had ordered the boats on that bank of the river to be burnt, and the detachment sent to do this set fire to all the craft it could find, and then carelessly let them float down stream. As Kléber marched for the two floating bridges at Neuwied where he meant to cross (Marceau leading, and Bernadotte forming his rear-guard), first one boat and then others in flames were seen coming down on the upper

¹ Ibid., 200, 495, 499.

² See Kléber in Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 568.

³ *Pajol*, i. 252-6; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 201-2.

bridge of boats, and were believed to have been launched intentionally by the garrison of Ehrenbreitstein. Marceau reached the bridge and got half of his division over before the first fire-boat touched the bridge, and then the slight damage done was at once repaired. But next came a regular flaming flotilla, ten, fifteen, and twenty boats at a time, some two hundred altogether, bearing down on the upper floating bridge, breaking and setting fire to it, for no chain had been placed above it: finally, the lower bridge also was lost. Marceau was in despair and, declaring he had caused the ruin of the army, was only saved from suicide by his A.D.C. In the meantime, Kléber on the right bank wrote to encourage him and, bringing him back, set him at the head of his four cavalry regiments (which had not got across), in order that he might cover the attempt to re-establish a bridge. Next morning, the 19th October, the troops, in good heart and ready to fight, were drawn up to receive the enemy. If the Austrians had sneered at the rapidity with which the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had retired, they kept off now, and on the 20th the bridge was ready, this time protected by a chain. Bernadotte and Championnet with the rest of Marceau's division crossed, leaving only a regiment to hold the *tête-de-pont* of Neuwied on the right bank.¹ On the 1st November even this bridge-head was given up, and Düsseldorf remained the only point at which the river could be crossed.²

¹ *Pajol*, i. 252-5; *Pajol, Kléber*, 189-91; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 568-9; Parfait, 212-16; Maze, 62-3; Soult, i. 260-1. Marceau's threat is denied, but Kléber is plain on the point: *Pajol, Kléber*, 190.

² *Pajol*, i. 258.

X

CLAIRFAYT'S COUNTERSTROKE

(October 1795 to January 1796)

Defeat of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' at Mayence, and loss of Mannheim. Pichegru retires to Landau. Criticism of Clairfayt, Jourdan, and Pichegru.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

26th October. Close of the Convention. The Directory established.

23rd-24th November. Victory of Schérer at Loano.

CLAIRFAYT did not pursue the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' beyond the Lahn, but, once convinced that Jourdan was on his way across the Rhine, he most sensibly turned back with the mass of his force in order to deal with the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', leaving only one-third of his troops under the Duke of Württemberg to watch the sister army. The Armée devant Mayence was now left unsupported and in great danger. Saint-Cyr understood the position and began to withdraw the siege artillery and to prepare for the evacuation of the lines, but Pichegru, though at first he approved of this course, gave way to the Representatives, and the batteries were again armed, as though the position were secured.¹ At the same time he tried to get Saint-Cyr to take command of the troops before Mayence in place of Schaal, who wanted to retire. Saint-Cyr, however, refused: from the first he had disliked the system on which the investment had been based, involving as it did the stringing out of the besieging troops in a thin cordon close to the place. Even this cordon had not been continued up to the Rhine on the right, so that there was a gap. Now the gap had been approved, if not suggested, by Desaix, who declared that, if the enemy tried to throw himself between the French and the river, he would repent it. Had he remained, he would probably have used this gap as a trap for the enemy, but, as we have seen, he had gone up the river, and a very different general was in his place. As Saint-Cyr says, every one knows the difference between one

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 220-9 (and 227 note 1), 500-14; Marmont, i. 70, 72-5.

man and another: the one makes a bad arrangement succeed, whilst the other may make the best fail.¹

Jourdan was urged by Pichegru to come up the left bank and reinforce the blockading troops, and he accordingly pushed up Poncet's division; but its first battalions did not begin to arrive till the 28th October and, not knowing the ground, were of little use. On that very night, however, the storm broke. Clairfayt, left free by the withdrawal of Jourdan, and by Pichegru's absorption in Mannheim and the upper river, poured out from Mayence and attacked the blockading body. False attacks amused the two left divisions, whilst a column came out for the gap in the works by the river and fell on the right division. Courtot, its commander, found that his rear was threatened by a small body of the enemy who had been taken up the river behind some islands, by an Englishman, Captain Williams, and landed at Bodenheim and Nackenheim, well above him. Instead of drawing in to his left on Saint-Cyr, whose men were making face to a fierce attack, Courtot lost his head and went straight off to the rear, and did not halt until on the night of the 29th October he reached Kirchheimbolanden, some twenty-one miles off. The confusion was made worse by Schaal's being at Ober-Ingelheim, far in rear of the left; when roused he had gone to the left divisions, so that no instructions were obtained from him for the right and centre. However, positions for a retreat had been settled beforehand, and these were at last occupied by the three divisions remaining (Saint-Cyr, Mengaud, and Renauld). So complete had been the disappearance of Courtot that Saint-Cyr, stretching out his right to regain touch with him, met the left of the 5th Division (Beaupuis), which had been above him, and which had come down to join Courtot.² Next day, the 30th October, the three divisions remained in the same positions, and on the 31st they fell back to the line of the Pfrimm river.

English readers will be struck by the telling exploit of their countryman, Williams, who did so much to terrify Courtot into flight. Taking a force of 1,000 Austrians up the river behind the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 172-4, 228-30, 246-56, and Atlas vii; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 252-3; Marmont, i. 70; Musset-Pathay, Plate IV *bis*.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 229-58, 509-11; Marmont, i. 75-6. See the comments of Pichegru on the affair, and extract from report of Schaal, Daudet, *Conjuration*, 163 and note.

islands, so that the French remarked nothing, he first landed his men well in rear of Courtot's right, and then manœuvred his boats as if he were about to form a bridge, and so enable a larger body to pour across the river. It was his attack, says Saint-Cyr, really unimportant as far as numbers went, which told most on the morale of Courtot and his men.¹ We shall find Williams commanding a flotilla on the lake of Zurich in 1799, but with a very different result.²

In all this turmoil Saint-Cyr had done well, bringing off some of the artillery from the works, and, like the divisions on the left, blowing up the magazines and the ammunition, so that the bursting shells delayed the pursuit of the enemy. He praises the behaviour of his men, indeed, although he says the two divisions of the left retired separately, suffering most in their rear-guards.³ Marmont says that Saint-Cyr's division was the only one to retire in order, covering the withdrawal of the left.⁴ This, however, is probably rather exaggerated, for the enemy had been slack in the pursuit. Marmont himself had been at Ober-Ingelheim, and, by the time he had galloped up to the village of Finthen on the left,⁵ he found the whole line retiring, each corps going off on its own account. Chancing into the midst of a regiment of heavy cavalry in full flight, he tried to rally the men, but, as they passed and left him in their rear, he was surrounded by three Austrian Hussars, and was for a moment taken prisoner, but was rescued by a trumpeter of the cavalry regiment, 'who in himself alone had more courage than all his corps'.⁶ Seeing that as much ammunition as possible was blown up, Marmont then went off to join the horse-artillery of the right, presumably that of Saint-Cyr,⁷ when he was again attacked by the enemy's cavalry, and saved himself only by the speed and endurance of his horse, whilst his orderly was taken.⁸ The truth was that the whole force might have been routed had the enemy, who seldom fully satisfied Saint-Cyr, neglected the left divisions and

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 233, 235.

² Koch, *Masséna*, iii. 489. (Koch, le général, *Mémoires de Masséna*, 7 vols., Paris, Paulin et Lechevalier, 1848-50.)

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 243-4.

⁴ Marmont, i. 73-4.

⁵ Feintheim in Marmont; Fintheim in Saint-Cyr, Atlas vii; Finthen in Vogel, xvii.

⁶ Marmont, i. 74, 142.

⁷ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 239.

⁸ Marmont, i. 142.

devoted themselves to crushing Saint-Cyr, when the left would have been at their mercy.¹

We hear a little of Marmont at this time from the future General Boulart, then a young artillery officer, who knew, but did not like him, although Marmont lived with him and took a fancy for him. Always thinking highly of himself, Marmont borrowed a horse from Boulart, despising the warning that it was difficult to ride, and the owner was much pleased to see the future Marshal twice thrown to his great confusion. Then, when the preparations for retreat made it necessary for Boulart to requisition a large number of horses, Marmont shocked him by giving instructions that he should receive some of the animals that their owners might abandon. The truth of Marmont's statement that at this period he praised Bonaparte to Desaix² is shown by the fact that he spoke of Bonaparte to Boulart with admiration and enthusiasm, as of a man called to the highest destiny. To Boulart Saint-Cyr seemed a man of about thirty, of fine physique, grave, talking little, imposing. How great was the poverty of the officers is shown by the fact that Boulart, although not with the starving troops in front, for long had a horse but no saddle, and was delighted when by selling the horse he was able to buy a cob and a saddle and bridle, 'I had been so miserable until then'.³ We also get from Boulart an explanation of the loss of the park belonging to the 'centre attack', which had been placed at Odernheim.⁴ An extraordinary story was started that this had been arranged by the two commanders in treacherous conference.⁵ In reality the young Boulart, unable to procure horses to remove his wagons and ammunition, waited till the last French troops had passed him, and then blew up the park. He suffered agonies for some days afterwards and was ready to emigrate if he should be accused of treachery, especially as the want of ammunition was at once felt; but he escaped scatheless.

Seldom even in the Revolutionary period has there been a more foolish waste of men than in this long blockade of Mayence, and one can only wonder at the endurance of the men and the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 256-8.

² Marmont, i. 80-1, and farther on at the end of this campaign.

³ Boulart, 14-16.

⁴ North-east of Alzey, Vogel, xxv.

⁵ Boulart, 16-19.

patience of the Generals. In the sister army the absurd whim of the Representatives to keep the force close to the fortress would probably have been overborne by a threat of resignation on the part both of Jourdan and of Kléber, and the way in which first the commander of the 'Rhin', Michaud, and then the commander of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', Pichegru, kept away from the blockade, is not creditable to either. Placed farther in rear, the troops would have suffered but little in comparison with what they actually did, and also would have been equally efficacious in the blockade, whilst the small immediate use Clairfayt made of his victory shows how safe they would have been from any sortie in force. Saint-Cyr, as I have said, was dissatisfied with Clairfayt : he had prepared his stroke well, using but few troops against the unimportant French left, but he had not followed up his first success in the way which Corporal Trim and Uncle Toby would have recommended,¹ although he had a whole unused reserve of 10,000 men on the right bank of the Rhine, ready to cross through the town.² He was a skilful General, made too cautious by long experience, according to Saint-Cyr.³ Now Napoleon, whose own wildest strokes, as at Laon, came late in his career, said that Turenne and he himself were the only Generals to improve by experience.⁴ Poor Schaal, as Saint-Cyr seems to think, might have been nearer his force,⁵ but he had been a mere figure-head, carrying out in the most self-denying way a policy that neither he nor any of the Generals could have approved. He was now placed in retirement, apparently by the Representatives. In May 1799 we find him appealing to Lecourbe to recommend him for re-employment to Masséna, then commanding the Armée d'Helvétie, and to assure him that the disaster at Mayence in 1795 was not caused by any fault of his.⁶

Farther up the river there had already been a disaster. Wurmser, left by Clairfayt to watch Pichegru, was too fiery a General to be content with the defensive, and on the 18th October in a heavy fog he attacked the French on the right bank before Mannheim. Here Pichegru, who himself was in the neighbourhood, if not for once actually present, had two

¹ *Tristram Shandy*, v, Chap. xxi.

³ *Ibid.*, 256-8.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 234, 241.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 231.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Méms.*, iv. 149-50.

⁶ Philebert, 127-8.

divisions (Ambert and Dusirat, late Dufour), Forest's cavalry-reserve, some 12,979 strong,¹ all under Desaix. The old Ferino was also present or near. Oudinot's brigade of Ambert's division was overwhelmed at Neckerau, and Oudinot himself, with his usual bad luck, fell with five sabre cuts and a ball. Unseen by his men in the gloom, he was carried off by the Austrians. In the centre Dusirat and Davout held their ground, and next morning Desaix was ready to support them with four cavalry regiments, but, seeing the superiority of the enemy's forces, he ordered the retreat, and himself charged with his twelve squadrons, thus covering the right of Davout, and enabling the two divisions to fall back to Mannheim.² This is one of the occasions to which Pichegru alluded when he said that two general officers, very active and enterprising, meaning Desaix and Ferino, had been checked in their efforts by the superiority of the enemy.³ When complaining to Moreau that his troops did not fight well, he made this affair an exception.⁴

Pichegru now came from the discomfited force at Mannheim and took command in person of the three divisions on the Pfrimm, reinforcing the body by the 5th Division (Beaupuis), which had been lining the river above Mayence, and also by some troops from Desaix, and the small cavalry reserve of Forest. His line stretched from the Rhine near Worms to Mont Tonnerre, or the Donnersberg, in rear of Kirchheimbolanden.⁵ Here he had 37,232 men, besides the two divisions left at Mannheim (some 12,000 strong), and four divisions (some 65,706 strong) along the Upper Rhine from Frankenthal⁶ to opposite Bâle.⁷ Courtot, the General most immediately responsible for the disaster before Mayence, was tried by a court-martial of which Pichegru was President, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment,⁸ being replaced by Ferino, who came from Mannheim, bringing his A.D.C., Savary, who had transferred from Desaix to Ferino.⁹ Desaix guarded the right by the river, and, as Pichegru was anxious about his left, which was in the air, he changed Saint-Cyr and Renauld, so that Saint-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii, Table 102.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 206-8; Nolle, 11. See Pichegru in Daudet, *Conjuration*, 155-7, 164; Curély, 107.

³ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 85.

⁴ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 164.

⁵ West of Worms.

⁶ South of Worms.

⁷ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii, Tables 102, 103.

⁸ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 164 note.

⁹ Savary, i, Part I, 7-8.

Cyr might have the dangerous post.¹ As the siege train had no further work, Captain Marmont was given command of the artillery of Desaix's division, where Foy had already distinguished himself² in command of a company of horse artillery.

Pichegru hoped to hold the line of the Pfrimm if Jourdan, having crossed the river far down, would march up the left bank and threaten Clairfayt's rear in order to draw off pressure from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. This Jourdan made two attempts to do. On the 6th November he pushed Lefebvre's division with d'Harville's reserve cavalry up the right bank of the Rhine, and at the same time sent Marceau's division up the left bank for Mayence. The first of these diversions was made too far off and, although Lefebvre reached the Sieg, almost opposite Bonn, the enemy wisely treated him with contempt, and he was recalled to Düsseldorf.³ Marceau's movement came nearer to success, and on the 5th November he actually reached Saint-Cyr, the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.⁴ I think that this junction is practically overlooked by the critics, but it shows how nearly the retreat from the Pfrimm and the loss of Mannheim were avoided. On the 9th November Marceau forced the enemy from the heights of Stromberg and over the Nahe: for a moment he even occupied Kreuznach, but he was just too late, and on the 10th November he heard the guns of Clairfayt, who was then driving the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' from the Pfrimm. Next day Clairfayt detached Wartensleben to strike northwards at him, and he had to retire from the Nahe.⁵ These operations gave a chance for distinction to Captain Savary, then a dashing cavalry officer with no thought of ever becoming a Minister of Police. He was recommended by Desaix for the rather dangerous mission of getting past the Austrian left and communicating with Marceau. He succeeded in doing this and in cutting his way back, winning praise both from Desaix and from Pichegru. General Sorbier accompanied him on his mission, and it is pleasant to observe the care Saint-Cyr takes to attribute its success to Sorbier.⁶

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 262-3.

² Marmont, i. 78.

³ Soult, i. 266, with wrong date.

⁴ Maze, 198-208; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 270-2, 516-23.

⁵ Maze, 209-13; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 280-1, 304, 306-7, 411, 419-23; *Vict. et Conq.*, v. 90-1; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 262-3, 266; Soult, i. 266; Vogel, xvii, xxii.

⁶ Savary, i, Part I, 8-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 269, 317. I presume Général Jean-Joseph-Augustin Sorbier (1774-1809), *Fastes*, iii. 560.

Saint-Cyr was now working over ground he had known well in 1794, and now, as then, he was in the hills, while Desaix was by the Rhine. He tells us that it was the custom to change the disposition of the troops each time the enemy was known to have made a reconnaissance, a precaution which had misled the Austrians in some of their late attacks.¹ One thing in the retreat had especially annoyed him : he had set his heart on defending Kaiserslautern, not so much, it would seem, that he considered it a really good position, but because it had been so often occupied, 'and to prove that there are few positions of which a good use cannot be made'.² This was one of the many instances of what we may call his caring more for the science of war than for immediate advantage. He might have been disappointed, for the troops he commanded, not those he had had before Mayence, had been disheartened by the disaster there; for instance, Adjutant-General Mangen took it into his head on the 6th November that the enemy was about to attack him in overpowering force, and off he went to the rear, becoming more excited the farther he got, till he reached Kaiserslautern, where he threw alarm into the head-quarters of the army. Being at length brought back, he found that no one had been following him.³ Lecourbe all this time had been commanding a brigade under Saint-Cyr, who, if he thought him imprudent, at least in one case, found fault in a manner which showed his esteem.⁴ Lecourbe was in a capital school.

Well as Clairfayt had struck from Mayence, he took long to follow up his advantage, and it was not till the 10th November that, having assembled 75,000 men and 150 guns, he attacked the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' on the Pfrimm. Pichegru had only 35,000 men with 36 to 40 guns, but there were still four divisions lining the Upper Rhine, and at least three of these might have been brought down to the army, giving a reinforcement of some 20,000 men. The details of the fighting which ensued can be read at length in Saint-Cyr,⁵ but they have no interest for us, except that apparently it was of Desaix that an Austrian officer wrote : 'At Frankenthal we had to do with a great General.

¹ Saint-Cyr, ii. 284-5 note 1.

² Ibid., 313.

³ Ibid., 269-73.

⁴ Philebert, 126.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 282-319; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 263-70; *Vict. et Conq.*, v. 92-5; Soult, i. 264-7; Vogel, xxii.

The retreat was a masterpiece of the military art. Our cavalry could not come to close quarters, because the enemy knew how to take up good positions. He made us pay dearly for every step we advanced.’¹ The ‘Rhin-et-Moselle’ was forced over the Pfrimm, and then Pichegru determined, unnecessarily in the opinion of Saint-Cyr, to retire up the river to Landau and the lines of the Queich, where the Armée du Rhin had lain in May 1793. Clairfayt had weakened himself by sending back Wartensleben to the Nahe to oppose Marceau, as I have already said, and therefore he did not press Pichegru farther; indeed he was occupied for the moment on another point.

The French retreat was fatal to Mannheim, which had been left with a garrison of less than 9,000 men and was not well provisioned. On the night of the 11th November Wurmser opened his trenches, and on the 21st the place capitulated. The commander of the garrison was Montaigu, a General from the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’, where undoubtedly he had been well thought of, though, as Saint-Cyr had pointed out to Pichegru at the time of Montaigu’s appointment, he was unknown in the ‘Rhin-et-Moselle’. Later on, when Pichegru’s treachery became known, Montaigu also was suspected, but Saint-Cyr thought that probably there was no treason in the surrender of Mannheim, and it is very likely that it would have been difficult to find any senior General willing to remain blockaded, with the prospect of becoming a prisoner. On this point M. Ernest Daudet defends Pichegru by pointing out Montaigu’s distinguished record as a divisional commander in the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’, with which army he fought at Fleurus; but one would like to know how he had drifted to the ‘Rhin-et-Moselle’. He might be a very good soldier without being fit for the arduous duties of commander of a besieged town. On his return to France he was acquitted by a court martial on the 25th October 1798 and served until 1811, but I do not find him amongst the recipients of the Legion of Honour.²

The affairs round Mannheim had lost for the army the services of two future Marshals, Oudinot, who was already a prisoner, and Davout, who was in the garrison. The two captive Generals

¹ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 168.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 273-4; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 264-6, 320; Daudet, *Conjuration*, 163-4, 173-7.

of Brigade had very different fates. Oudinot, severely wounded, was taken to Ulm, where he remained until the 7th January 1796, when he was exchanged against the Austrian General Zainiau, and on the 27th January 1796 Pichegru gave him leave to proceed to his home at Bar-le-Duc, where he remained recovering his health. On the 13th April 1796 he was included amongst the Generals of Brigade of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', then under Moreau, but all the formalities of his exchange were not yet completed. On the 1st June he was appointed Governor of Phalsbourg, and then, at last, on the 20th July he was posted to command Frimont's late brigade in the division of Delmas.¹ During his residence at Ulm he had received much attention from the *émigrés*, and, when returning to France, he had spoken to an officer of the Armée de Condé at Hechingen, who made the Prince de Condé believe that Oudinot sympathized with them and had wished the Prince to know that he could count on Pichegru, then in secret correspondence with Condé.² I will refer to this later, when dealing with the treachery of Pichegru, but the incident must have been due to some misunderstanding. Davout on the other hand had the luck to find in Wurmser a friend of one of his uncles, whom he had met at Versailles, and Wurmser, sending for the young General, told him he could at once return to France, *en parole*; so Davout went home to Ravières, where he remained until the end of the campaign of 1796, rejoining the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' as it arrived back on the Rhine.³

An effort had been made by Jourdan to save Mannheim. On the 13th November Bernadotte had been sent up from Coblenz to reinforce Marceau, and, as Pichegru's position became worse, Jourdan determined to march with the mass of his army up the left bank to the rescue. The delay seemed long to the impatient Saint-Cyr, but apparently Jourdan was waiting for a detachment of nine battalions and seven squadrons from the Armée du Nord, which took over the line from Düsseldorf to Cologne and thus set free Lefebvre from the right bank to guard the river from Cologne to Andernach. Kléber carried on the line to Oberwesel.⁴ On the 27th November Jourdan began his advance from Simmern with the divisions of Marceau, Poncet, Bernadotte,

¹ Nollet, II-13, 305-6.

³ Vigier, i. 57-9.

² Wickham, i. 256.

⁴ Soult, i. 268.

and Championnet, and d'Harville's cavalry, some 40,000 men in all. While the left moved on Bingen, Bernadotte took Kreuznach, and on the right Marceau crossed the Nahe on the 29th November at Kirn, but was thrown back from Lauterecken,¹ and again on the 7th December had to retreat to Sobernheim on the Nahe, with a loss of from 800 to 900 men. Meanwhile Jourdan had heard on the 28th November of the fall of Mannheim, and, having now no reason for standing to receive the shock of the whole Austrian army, he withdrew from the Nahe to the northern side of the Soon-Wald mountains.²

Soult, it may be noted, had not accompanied Poncet's division, but was back with Lefebvre, who had not ceased to demand his return. Soult himself was anxious to get back to his 'digne chef' and to be among troops 'the first to engage, the last to leave the field, always in presence of the enemy, often alone in the combat, assuring the security of the army by their vigilance'.³ On the 23rd October he was given the command of Lefebvre's brigade of light troops.

The effect of the fall of Mannheim seemed decisive of the campaign, for Wurmser now crossed over to the left bank and placed himself facing up-stream against Pichegru and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', whilst Clairfayt at Mayence, swinging round down-stream, devoted himself once more to Jourdan and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Those who believe that nothing can be done in war except by heavy fighting may be surprised by the striking change in the situation from what it had been in October, when Jourdan was investing Mayence on both banks, and Pichegru was picking and choosing his point of crossing, whilst Clairfayt was intent alone on securing his retreat. Since then there had been little fighting and no general battle, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had only had slight affairs, and the defeat of the four divisions of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' before Mayence was the heaviest loss that army had suffered. Yet now the two Austrian commanders stood back to back on the left bank between the two French armies, with one point of passage at Mannheim and another, more secure, at Mayence, whose strong garrison could now be

¹ Maze, 217.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 271-3; *Vict. et Conq.*, 95-8; *Pajol*, i. 260-2; Maze, 214-22; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 321, 533-4; Vogel, xvii, xxii.

³ Soult, i. 261-2.

drawn on. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had lost its point of passage at Mannheim, and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' that of Neuwied, so that the only footing the French had on the right bank was far down the river, at Düsseldorf. The game was in the hands of the Austrians, and at first they seemed about to use their advantage.

The Directory thought this a happy opportunity for advising Jourdan to entice the Austrians to move westwards through the gap between the two French armies, and then to throw himself between them and Mayence.¹ What would have happened when they swung round and caught him with his back to the Rhine and to Mayence with its strong garrison the Directory did not explain. Far from undertaking such wild movements, Jourdan, as he realized the helplessness of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' and his own exposed position, prepared to fall back from the Hunsrück across the Moselle, and began the preparation of an entrenched camp at Trarbach² on that river to ensure his passage. Still, he wished to hold on as long as he could, and at one time he called up Kléber with his two divisions to support him, but on the 12th December that force was ordered back.³ Nothing could have been gloomier than the situation at this moment: Marceau was writing that pillage and insubordination had got to such a height amongst his starving troops that nothing except his honour and the friendship he bore for Jourdan prevented his leaving the service and his command in disgust.⁴ Unless the Government could bring up large reinforcements from Moreau's Armée du Nord, it was hard to see where the divergent retreat of the two armies on the Rhine would end.

Now came another sudden turn of the military kaleidoscope. The Austrians had their own difficulties and considered themselves unable to carry on a winter campaign. To them Jourdan, instead of showing signs of retreat, appeared to be able at least to hold his ground: indeed, as his right had been threatened, he ordered Marceau to attack. On the 17th December 1795 Marceau threw back the enemy from Stipshausen and Sulzbach-on-Kirn, and, although on the left Grenier was driven back to Bacharach, the blow seems to have told.⁵ Pichegru also was

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 535-6; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 275.

² North-east of Bernkastel, Vogel, xvii.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 198.

⁴ Maze, 219-20.

⁵ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 275-6; Pajol, i. 266; but it must have been a slight affair, Maze, 238-40; Vogel, xvii.

pushing forward his troops,¹ though, by a curious contrast, the enemy had most of their men on their outer flanks in the Palatinate, whilst the French kept the larger proportion of their troops on their inner flanks by the Rhine.² On the 19th December Clairfayt proposed an armistice, and Jourdan most wisely accepted, making a condition, often curiously lost sight of by commanders in the same position, that it should extend to all the forces on the Rhine, and so prevent any blow at Pichegru. A special line of demarcation was defined.³

As for the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', an Austrian officer had already proposed an armistice to Saint-Cyr, who could only refer it to Pichegru; but that commander seemed not to care for it, and did not even reply. Then Jourdan sent an officer, accompanied by an Austrian General from Clairfayt, to Pichegru, who did not dare to refuse his acceptance of the armistice. Saint-Cyr professes to see in the armistice only the escape of Jourdan from a difficult position,⁴ but either French army might have had to bear the whole weight of the Austrians, and Saint-Cyr probably was rather nettled by having just been called off by Pichegru from an attack on his favourite problem, the position of Kaiserslautern.⁵ In reality the armistice was a great advantage to the French, and its conclusion ruined Clairfayt with his Government. The Directors, with touchy vanity, quibbled in a manner which might have cost them dearly, and at first disallowed the armistice on the plea that they alone had the power to conclude one. Then, discovering the mistake they were making in not closing with the bargain, they sent a delegate with full powers, and on the 10th January 1796 the armistice was formally concluded.⁶

About the middle of January 1796 the division of the 'Nord' that had guarded Düsseldorf marched away for Tirlemont and Brussels, and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' took up its winter quarters. Marceau, commanding the right wing, had his right at Ottweiler⁷ and the front ran thence pretty much along the line given by the armistice, north-east to the Rhine (Bernadotte

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 328-30, 546-9.

² *Ibid.*, 324 note 1.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 276; *Pajol*, i, 266-7, and Appendix.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 330-2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 329-30.

⁶ *Pajol*, i. 271-2; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 276; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 90-1; *Vict. et Conq.*, v. 102-3.

⁷ North-east of Saarbrücken, on the Blies.

being between Simmern and Coblenz), and then to Düsseldorf.¹ Lefebvre was on the right bank, in Düsseldorf, Soult's brigade being pushed up the river to the little town of Solingen. 'This event', says Soult, 'determined the most important and the happiest act of my life. . . . I lodged with Mme Berg. She saw me enter her house with indifference. Three months afterwards, on the 26th April 1796, she granted me the hand of her daughter, and she founded a happiness which has only increased with the passing years.'² Soult, writing at earliest in 1816, and leaving his memoirs uncompleted in 1830, remembers to say a good word for his brother and to speak of the happiness of his marriage. His origin, at highest, made him the son of a notary. The well-born Marmont most unnecessarily informs the reader of the faults of his Duchess towards him.³ Here the ranker writes like a gentleman and the gentleman like a disappointed boor. Mme Soult⁴ was a Protestant, but, at least in her old age, like a sensible woman attended mass with her husband every Sunday.⁵ The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' also went into winter quarters under circumstances better described later on.

Soon after the armistice Captain Marmont left the army for Paris. General Bonaparte had never lost sight of him, and had nominated him to the mission to improve the Turkish artillery, on which he hoped to be sent in July 1795.⁶ Then, appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Armée de l'Intérieur after the *Jour des Sections*, he sent for Marmont, who rejoined him. Before leaving, Marmont had unconsciously done a thing which was to influence the life of Desaix and with him that of Davout. Desaix had put his head-quarters at the village of Neusdorf, three miles south of Neustadt,⁷ where Marmont was also, and the two had become intimate. Passionately fond of his profession, Desaix spoke of it in an interesting manner, and Marmont often told him there was a man still unknown, born with a genius for war, whose mind, character, authority, were transcendent, and who would eclipse all who had shone hitherto, if Fortune ever placed him at the head of an army: this was Bonaparte, whose plans for the action of the Armée d'Italie

¹ *Pajol*, i. 272-5; Vogel, xxii, xvii, xii; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas, i.

² Soult, i. 271-2.

³ Marmont, vii. 57-65.

⁴ Jeanne-Louise-Elisabeth Berg, died 22nd March 1852.

⁵ Castellane, iii. 287.

⁶ Jung, *Bonaparte*, iii. 61-5.

⁷ Neustadt, north-west of Speyer, Vogel, xxii.

must have been often explained to Marmont. Of course this seemed youthful exaggeration to Desaix, who always answered, 'My dear Marmont, you are very young to pronounce such a judgement ; perhaps friendship blinds you, for, be sure of it, the command of an army is the most difficult thing in the world ; it is a business that calls for the concentration within a definite period of the very greatest abilities'.¹ They separated, but Marmont's words stuck in Desaix's memory, and we may be certain went for much in the resolution he took in 1798, together with Davout, to join Bonaparte ; a resolution which took Davout to the *bâton*, and Desaix to Marengo.

Lavalette, the dates in whose account are hard to follow, must have left the army before Marmont. His former chief, General Baraguey d'Hilliers, released from prison at Paris, had been made Chief of the Staff to the 1st Military Division, that of the Capital, and once more took him as A.D.C. He says he arrived at Paris in the middle of August 1795.²

The sudden and sorry end to Clairfayt's movements is probably the reason why the campaign of 1795 on the Rhine, so interesting in its possibilities, is not better known and referred to. Soult describes Clairfayt as 'prudence personified',³ but surely that commander had done remarkably well until he thus balked at the finish. There were, it is true, between each of his strokes, curious halts which chafe the critic, and make him wonder what the results would have been if the Austrian advantages had been pressed with the restless energy of Bonaparte. Once Jourdan, thrown back from Mayence, was again on the left of the Rhine, almost every man of the Austrians might have been passed through Mayence and have made an end of Pichegru. Then a return blow northwards would have crushed Jourdan. But Bonaparte in 1796 worked in a rich country, virgin of war, whilst the left bank of the Rhine had been drained by hostile armies for years : thus doubtless difficulties of supply trammelled the Austrian commander as well as the French. Still, considering how the Austrians began and how they ended the campaign, one must have much respect for Clairfayt, who had certainly

¹ Marmont, i. 78-81. See Boulart, 15, for Marmont's similar conversation with him at this time.

² Lavalette, i, Part I, 135, correcting the date 1794 to 1795.

³ 'La prudence même', Soult, i. 256.

shown more skill than any commander on either side up to this date, while the campaign itself, with all its curious and enticing possibilities, rewards inquiry and study.

While Clairfayt, the successful General, was removed from his command by the Austrian Government, and was replaced by the Archduke Charles, Jourdan, who at least had not been defeated in the field, was sharply criticized, both at the time and later, by historians. His crossing of the Rhine and his march up the right bank to Mayence deserved all praise, he had quite succeeded in his part of preparing the junction with the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and, had Pichegru possessed equal talents or good faith, and had chosen to seize the golden chance offered by the capture of Mannheim, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' would have poured across the river, the Austrian armies would have been separated and would have had to retreat rapidly, and the campaign would have been an unbroken success. The Government would probably have insisted that nothing more should be done until Mayence and Ehrenbreitstein had been taken, but even that would have been a satisfactory result and might have ended the war.

As late as the 4th October Jourdan was insisting that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' ought to advance from Mannheim, but, when Pichegru and the Representatives failed to understand the situation, and Clairfayt, finding Pichegru bottled in Mannheim, was able to concentrate against the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' on the Main, the retreat of that army became inevitable: Saint-Cyr, an impartial observer on this point, and who, as I have said, visited the army just before its retreat, foresaw the necessity. It is true that Saint-Cyr is ready to blame Jourdan for leaving so large a part of his force behind at Düsseldorf and in front of Ehrenbreitstein, when he first advanced,¹ but this is unfair. It was but natural that, hemmed in as he was by the line of neutrality, but not absolutely protected by it, as events showed, he should be anxious about his point of secure crossing in case of disaster. Also it must always be remembered that the Government had a strong belief in the necessity for keeping the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in touch with the 'Nord' in Holland, and this too when,

¹ Marceau had 11,240 men blockading a garrison of 2,600 in Ehrenbreitstein, but he would also patrol the bank above and below. Colaud had 8,911 at Düsseldorf, Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 197; *Pajol*, i. 209; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 213-14.

according to all military requirements, every available man should have been drawn from Holland up the Rhine.¹ Whether he shared this belief or not, Jourdan must have been aware of it and had to take it into account. Saint-Cyr, always serving far up the river, had his eyes opened, if only by the interests of his army, to the advantages of operating on the Upper Rhine. Jourdan on the contrary, who had served in the Netherlands, and who had already once been nearly ordered on Münster, had reason for considering the campaign with reference to the Lower as well as to the Upper Rhine.²

Difficulties of supply hindered all the operations of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and, as I have said, Kléber had described the army as driven from the Lahn by famine. On the 11th December 1795 at Coblenz Kléber found an officer in rags, with no head-dress except a greasy cap : he had lost all his belongings in a fire, and had no cash to get more. Kléber gave him everything he could, but said thousands were in the same state, and, if this were the case with officers close to a large town, judge what the men must have suffered. In two days in December, wrote Kléber, whose troops were stationary, more than four hundred men deserted out of two regiments.³ The magazines were empty, the artillery had not enough horses, and the cavalry were wretchedly mounted.⁴ The Government seem to have done all they could, not only to leave the armies in misery, but also to insult them ; thus just at this time they considered it a proper and generous thing to present a pair of boots to each officer. Doubtless the officers, receiving little if any pay, were glad to get even that, but the remarks made can be imagined. The same sufferings fell on most of the armies of the Republic, and their effects were long felt. Here, as elsewhere, I keep from description of the ravages of skin disease. Now on this question of supplies I think that Saint-Cyr is not quite fair when he says that Clairfayt's violation of the line of neutrality was an advantage for Jourdan, who could then himself break through that line and obtain supplies from the untouched country.⁵ This

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 277. 'J'ai bien entendu dire qu'on se trouvait obligé de couvrir la Belgique', Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 322.

² Even in 1796 the Directory had views on Hanover, Ompteda, 86.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 195-9.

⁴ Jourdan, 15, 16. 'La solde arriérée pour la troupe, illusoire pour les officiers.'

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 214-15.

is to assume that such a wholesale and continued violation would not have met with resistance from the Prussians on the ground. The Prussians might wink at any slight overlapping of the line of hostilities, or more likely their remonstrances at such a momentary breach as that of Clairfayt might take days to be answered, but totally and permanently to disregard the whole line might have forced them into active measures, dangerous to the peace between the two countries. It would have been a serious matter for a French commander under a tight curb to vary his instructions to such a degree : an Austrian General might be imprisoned for misconduct, but he was not playing for his head. Saint-Cyr also suggests that Jourdan, if he had wanted to stand before Kastel, could have drawn supplies from the left bank : yet it is Saint-Cyr who describes the sufferings of his own troops on this fertile left bank.¹

It is not Jourdan's retreat to, or even from, the Lahn that is so much blamed, or even his recrossing of the Rhine, but the subsequent dispersal of his army in its original cantonments on the left bank. What, it is said, he ought to have done was to recross as far up as possible, and then, as soon as each division was over, to send it up the left bank to support the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.² Had he done this, no doubt the Austrian stroke from Mayence would have found a force fit to resist it, and certainly, if we view the question as entirely a military one, and consider Jourdan as having a free hand, he was much to blame. I believe, however, that the critics, such as Saint-Cyr and Jomini, although making certain qualifications in their attacks, forget that he was bound by the orders of the Government and by the restrictions that existed at the time on the action of the Generals.

Once back on the left bank, we have every reason for assuming that he would have marched to the relief of Pichegru. He, however, was not generalissimo, and neither Pichegru, who nominally occupied that post, nor the Government cared anything for the junction of the two armies. In the letter of the 3rd December 1795 to which Saint-Cyr appeals in order to show that the Directory wished Jourdan to act on the Nahe, it is plain that the junction was not desired. 'Keep apart and

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 149 : 'Le Palatinat est, comme on le sait, riche en productions de toute espèce, mais depuis longtemps il était épuisé par le séjour des armées.'

² Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 203-6 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 278-82.

leave a good gap to let the enemy get well in between you,' is the real burden of the directions. 'If you succeed in persuading the enemy' (that he was moving on the Sarre or the Moselle) 'there is no doubt but that they will move into the gap which exists between the armies of the Sambre-et-Meuse and the Rhin-et-Moselle, and give you the possibility of arriving impetuously on their rear.'¹ Indeed, as Carnot was one of the Directors, there can be no doubt that a junction was disliked. However, to use this letter of the 3rd December 1795 to show the intentions of the Government in October is unwarranted, for in October they had no idea of operating on the Nahe, the necessity for which they could not help seeing in December.

Here, as often elsewhere, critics carry ideas formed in later years, most sensible ideas I acknowledge, into an utterly different period, and treat the two armies as if they had been one, under one commander, with a single aim in view. Nothing can be farther removed from this point of view than the rules which governed the Generals in 1795; and no General of that time could, of his own initiative, have abandoned his district and have marched into that of another army. It was for the Government alone to have authorized such a movement, and, when they did so, Jourdan marched southwards for the Nahe. Saint-Cyr wisely qualifies his criticisms on Jourdan by acknowledging that the case would be altered if the Government had given different orders,² and Soult explains that this is exactly what did occur.³ Jourdan could not leave his district without permission from Paris, and it must always be remembered that, according to the strategy of the patriots, every point, first of the frontier, later of the Rhine, had to be held. The sweep of the Grande Armée in 1805 from the shores of the Channel to Ulm would have been denounced in 1795 as a criminal exposure of the coast.

The isolated operations ordered by the Government, the detachment of Lefebvre up the right, and of Marceau up the left bank, were weak measures, but it is again the Government, not Jourdan, that must bear the blame. When he got the necessary permission, he delivered a blow on the Nahe sufficient to save the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' if that army would have done some-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 280, 535-8.

² *Ibid.*, 276 note 1.

³ Soult, i. 265-6.

thing to help itself. Even Saint-Cyr acknowledges that Pichegru, if he had chosen to use all his available force, might have held on the Pfrimm long enough to have given time for Jourdan's arrival within striking distance of the enemy.¹ But Saint-Cyr's criticisms on Jourdan, and his denial of the charge that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' abandoned the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', do not ring quite true to me. He sees the enormous faults of his commander, but his affection for his own army makes him lay stress on the reasons possible to adduce, where they affected the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Thus he makes much of the small advance of the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' after that army had been driven back on the Queich, to show that this saved Jourdan from being crushed on the Nahe,² whereas that commander would simply have had to retire, gathering strength as he fell back. It was on the Pfrimm that Pichegru ought to have held, but the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' wanted to play Andromeda to Jourdan's Perseus, while, instead of at least sticking to her rock, Andromeda, still shrieking for her deliverer, kept slipping away from him.

The limits of a commander's self-sacrifice are not very wide, but, when it is a question of sacrificing one army to another, then we come to very narrow bounds indeed, and it must be remembered that the sacrifice in this case would have been great, for the army suffered very much, just as it did when forced to march later, to an extent which can be best judged in the correspondence of Marceau. It did manage to march up the river in November, says Jomini ;³ yes, but that was under clear authority, and when the necessity was manifest. At the end of October the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' might have repented at any moment and have crossed by Mannheim, when Jourdan, one foot already on the right bank, would have been ready to cross again.

The mistake of Saint-Cyr and of Jomini can be best seen in their views on Düsseldorf. Why, say they, should Jourdan care to remain to guard that, instead of marching on the Nahe for Mannheim ?⁴ They are, of course, right as to the relative importance of the two places, but, when Jourdan had pointed out the value of Mannheim, he had stood alone against Pichegru and

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 301-6.

² *Ibid.*, 324-5.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 204.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 278 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 204, 270.

the Representatives, and apparently the Government as well. Düsseldorf was in his charge, Mannheim in that of Pichegru, who cared little for it.¹ How could Jourdan be expected to endanger his own charge for the property of another man who attached no importance to it? He had done all that could have been hoped for from him. Just as a man thinks first of his own skin, so a General thinks first of his own army. Worn out with marching, half-starved, and wanting everything, it was natural that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' should now begin to think of its own comforts and existence.

One strong argument in favour of Jourdan is that his conduct throughout seems to have met with the approval of his critical lieutenant, Kléber. The retreat from the Main Kléber obviously considered, as did Saint-Cyr, inevitable, and that from the Lahn, blamed by Saint-Cyr, he attributed to 'famine alone'.² Then the withdrawal to the Nahe, so much attacked, was actually counselled by him,³ a point the more important as Kléber 'did not like retreats'. So great was the misery of his troops that he was anxious to resign, but in telling Jourdan this he spoke of 'the important services you have rendered to our country'. Now when Kléber was dissatisfied it was hard if the cause were not known.

To sum up, as far as Jourdan is concerned, it is certain that the campaign ought not to have been undertaken in autumn, and before the army was fully supplied, for its state of destitution told on all the operations. Saint-Cyr sneeringly remarks that this cannot be seriously asserted, as it would be the most bitter criticism which could be made on a Commander-in-Chief, who could have no excuse for entering into a campaign in such a state.⁴ Apparently he forgot what he had previously admitted, that the Government, 'dépourvu de sagesse,' had pressed, he might have said forced, the commanders into this course at a time when disobedience had serious consequences; and he himself admits that 'it must be recognized that Jourdan directed the campaign with great prudence and much skill, so that he eluded the greatest part of the difficulties'.⁵ In other words,

¹ As is shown by his retiring from the Pfimm and thus abandoning Mannheim. Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 313.

² Ibid., 568.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 193-4, 197.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 214-15.

⁵ Ibid., 185-6.

Jourdan, forced to obey foolish orders, did the best a commander could have done. It must be allowed that both the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and its commander had suffered some dimming of their glory; their march had been no longer one triumphal progress and, although not defeated in the field, they had been baffled, and the troops had suffered many hardships. Still, the prestige of Jourdan and his army stood high.

In the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', on the other hand, the commander had fallen much in reputation and the army had suffered along with him. Pichegru was certainly a blunderer and probably already a traitor. In 1793 Hoche had whirled him on to the relief of Landau, and in 1794 Jourdan's advance had borne him through Holland. Now for the first time he had been placed on his real trial as a commander, and he had failed; and failed to such a degree that suspicion of him began to be entertained almost unconsciously. He seems never to have anticipated the action of his enemy: Clairfayt's prompt issue from Mayence found the French force unsupported, and on the Pfimm Pichegru was not given the respite that, though warned by Saint-Cyr, he expected, till Jourdan could arrive to succour him.¹ His own capture of Mannheim took him as much by surprise as did the enemy's subsequent attack on it. Kléber, referring to the belief that Pichegru had won over the garrison before he attacked, put the matter thus: 'C'est le cas de dire que ce qui vient par la flûte s'en va par le tambour.'² Altogether, whilst I believe with Saint-Cyr³ that Pichegru was still acting in good faith, his blundering was so great that Soult thought it could be explained only by treachery.⁴ Soult's words are worth giving. Asserting that Pichegru was an inferior General, he goes on: 'But incapacity itself has limits, and at the point at which we are in this campaign, the operations before Mannheim, those limits seem to have been exceeded: the incapacity of the General does not seem to me to afford a sufficient explanation of what was done on the side of the French, still less to explain the conduct of the Austrians. Marshal Clairfayt, who was prudence personified, would not have advanced against the army of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' (when it was on the Main) 'with his left flank and his rear so closely threatened by the army of

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 264.

³ *Ibid.*, 264-6.

² *Ibid.*, 571.

⁴ Soult, i. 255-6.

the Rhin-et-Moselle, if he had not had good reasons for being secure on that point'. This of course is true, as Clairfayt did not move till he knew there was not enough force at Mannheim to break through on his rear, but the weakness of the French there was probably due to mere misconception of the situation and want of daring on the part of Pichegru. With the latter's treachery I shall deal in the next chapter.

As for other officers serving in the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in 1795, Savary had won more credit, and was considered as a useful and daring A.D.C. Little public credit is generally won in any disaster, but Saint-Cyr's conduct when the investing force had been driven from in front of Mayence had deserved much praise, although his reluctance for high command prevented his name from becoming more prominent. Desaix had not been fortunate, but, as Pichegru had assured the *Comité*, not through any fault of his own, and the men preserved their confidence in him. One of the Representatives, speaking of the 'prodigies of valour' Desaix and his men had shown in one attack, and complaining of the want of horses for the artillery and the staff, said: 'If Desaix, who has accustomed the troops to see him everywhere, had enough horses to be able to go on, the troops would go with him to hell.'¹ The army itself, broken up into separate and ill-connected bodies, had been driven from the Queich and had seen Mannheim, its one easy conquest, torn from it. No doubt the detachment of 10,000 men to the 'Alpes' and to 'Italie' had drained much of the strength of the army, but its performance had been pitiful.

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 88-90.

XI

THE TREACHERY OF PICHEGRU

(December 1795 to May 1796)

Situation of the armies. Pichegru's negotiations with the Royalists. His probable intentions. He is succeeded by Moreau.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

1796 11th-22nd April. Bonaparte's first victories, and entry into Piedmont.

28th April. Armistice of Cherasco with Sardinia.

DURING the period that followed the cessation of hostilities there was a strange difference between the situations of the two armies. Once the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was safely housed for the rest of the winter, Jourdan was glad to get to Paris to explain matters to the Directory. Ill-health was nominally the cause of his absence, and doubtless he was much exhausted both in body and mind. He started on the 19th January 1796, leaving Kléber in command. That General had refused to replace Pichegru with the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in November 1795. His health of course was then his excuse, besides the modesty which, he declared, prevented his accepting a burden above his powers, and on the 11th December 1795 he had informed Jourdan of his determination to retire at once. Jourdan at this time had the secret of getting him into the collar, and now Kléber's convenient health enabled him to write cheerfully to Moreau, commanding the 'Nord' on his left, that he would probably have little to do during the armistice, but, if circumstances changed before he were replaced, he hoped that, combining their efforts, they would know how to sustain the glory of the arms of the Republic. The next campaign was to show what could be expected from Moreau in the way of combined efforts. As for Jourdan, Kléber hoped that his visit to Paris might effect a real change in the situation. 'It seems to me', he wrote to his commander on the 11th December, 'that after the important services you have rendered to the country the most important you can still perform would be to open its eyes to our actual situation.'¹

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 196, 197, 200.

The Directory gave Jourdan a most flattering reception, for he was the first commander the new Government had received ; each member of it paid him attention, and he was presented with a fine set of arms of the manufacture of Versailles, so justly renowned.¹

His welcome vexed the Clichyens, or the Royalist party, who asserted that he was fêted as a Jacobin, whilst the good Pichegru, who had put down that faction in the spring of 1795, was kept in the shade.² This was a curious anticipation of Pichegru's coming alliance with the Clichyens. As we shall see, Pichegru soon left the command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', the Directory, according to Barras, accepting his resignation because he was at variance with Jourdan, who had been the more docile of the two, and whom therefore it preferred to retain.³ As for Jourdan, he went to the Directory every day to work with Carnot and to confer with the other members of the Directory. 'It is suspected', wrote the Prussian minister at Paris, 'that the war is not the only object of these conferences, and political matters must have something to do with them.'⁴ However, the Prussian minister knew what few persons did, that the frightful state of his army was the subject of the General's most urgent representations, but he assured the Directory that the Austrians were no better off. Jourdan cannot have helped meeting in the Capital a young General, Bonaparte, insignificant in appearance and unknown in the past, who had been given the command of Paris and of the army of the Interior for having suppressed the rising, or 'Jour des Sections', on the 5th October 1795, just before the Directorial Constitution came into force. Doubtless Jourdan looked on this as one of the numerous political appointments of men that soon disappeared, and never dreamt that his next campaign would be influenced by the victories of the young upstart.

By the 29th February 1796 Jourdan was back from Paris and at his head-quarters at Cologne. Every effort was made to get the army ready for the next campaign, and one great improvement was pressed on, that is the 'embrigadement' or amalgamation of the regulars and volunteers, which here as elsewhere simplified all details of administration and made the army more

¹ *Larévellière-Lépeaux*, i. 389.

³ Barras, ii. 86-7.

² *Ibid.*

⁴ Bailleu, 47.

homogeneous. The line of the Moselle had been strengthened ; *têtes-de-pont* covered its bridges ; works defended Trèves, Trarbach, and Coblenz, while on the right bank of the Rhine the entrenched camp of Düsseldorf was completed. The line of neutrality had been widened by a fresh treaty with Prussia on the 5th May 1796, so that the army was no longer so cramped as during the previous year.¹ Indeed in October 1795 Hardenberg, the Prussian Minister, vexed by the march of Clairfayt across the line of neutrality, had ordered the Prince von Hohenlohe to withdraw the Prussian troops from Frankfurt and that district, where they had blocked Jourdan in 1795. The reasons given by Hardenberg should be read, but, whatever his real motives, this step turned to the advantage of the French.²

The divisions were re-numbered as follows : *Avant-garde*, Lefebvre ; 1st Division, Marceau ; 2nd, Colaud ; 3rd, Poncet ; 4th, Grenier³ ; 5th, Bernadotte ; 6th, Championnet ; infantry reserve, Bonnard ; cavalry reserve, Bonnaud. Kléber soon took command of the left wing (Lefebvre and Colaud). The whole strength of the army was 63,097 infantry, 11,400 cavalry, 3,295 artillery : total 77,792.⁴ Grenier was well known under the Empire.⁵ Lefebvre's fighting *avant-garde* was 12,549 strong, and in it Soult and Leval had brigades ; d'Hautpoul and, later, Richepanse commanded the divisional cavalry, and Colonel Mortier was an Adjutant-General. Bernadotte had 8,417 men, with a Brigadier, General Simond, who was to be concerned with him in a plot in 1802.

Colonel Ney was no longer on the actual staff of Kléber, but was an Adjutant-General in Colaud's division, and so was still much under Kléber's eye. Colaud's health soon broke down, so that he held local commands only, becoming Senator under the Empire, but probably he had something to do with the formation of Ney's character, and I have given some description of him when Ney served as his A.D.C. with the 'Nord'.⁵ He had now in the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' become a friend of Kléber,

¹ Rambaud, 289 ; Bailleu, 150-1.

² Bailleu, 24-7, 29-31.

³ Général Comte Paul Grenier (1768-1827). Commanded left wing of the 'Rhin' under Moreau in 1800, and had high command in Italy in the last years of the Empire. *Fastes*, iii. 253-6.

⁴ Jourdan, 17 ; Wouters, 122-3 ; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 282 ; *Pajol*, i. 281, 324-5 ; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii, Table 104.

⁵ Phipps, 274.

and in joining Colaud, Ney served with just such another 'frondeur' as Kléber, so that, his own character being much of the same type, the evil side of him doubtless was developed to his own, and later to the Empire's detriment. We may assume that at the beginning of 1796 the criticisms of Jourdan by Kléber and his party were mild, the usual growls against the commander that is not completely successful ; but, as the campaign went on and became more and more disastrous, the conduct of Kléber, Colaud, and their party became worse and worse, as we shall see. The Kléber and Colaud of 1796 under Jourdan have a strong and unpleasant resemblance to the Ney of 1811 under Masséna. Also it seems that it was in this campaign, certainly in this army, that the long hostility of Ney and Soult began, from what cause is not stated. There seems no sign now or in all the years of the Republic of Soult's being headstrong, nor are his criticisms unfair, but it is remarkable that, when Napoleon picked out two of his Marshals as being very difficult to handle, it should have been Soult and Ney. In this campaign Soult was in the good school of the straightforward, hard-fighting Lefebvre, who apparently was always loyal to Jourdan.

I turn now to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Whilst the pause in the operations had allowed the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' to go into comfortable cantonments, it had brought small relief to the army on the Upper Rhine, for, though Pichegru sent most of the cavalry to the rear to procure better supplies, he left the unfortunate infantry in the lines of the Queich and in the Annweiler valley, to starve in the poor and stripped country exhausted by its long occupation by Austrians and French. His men were encamped in the mud and snow, without even straw to lie on, whilst their commander, placing his head-quarters at Haguenau, abandoned himself to debauches, in one of which, as I have already said, the disgusted Desaix found him. The needless strain on the men was too much for Saint-Cyr, who took on himself to draw back his division some ten marches, or thirty leagues, to good cantonments and an untouched district where they could recover from their sufferings. Saint-Cyr himself placed his head-quarters at Zweibrücken. Pichegru must have known of this change, made without his permission, but, to add to the many extraordinary things of an extraordinary

situation, nothing was ever said to Saint-Cyr on the subject. The army lay not only facing the enemy on the right bank of the river, but also having a great part of the Austrians at Mannheim and Mayence practically between it and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', whilst its commander was in secret correspondence with the Prince de Condé, the General of the corps of *émigrés*, and was giving his advice as to how the enemy should act.

It is, I think, in June 1795 that we find English Ministers, at least, first mentioning Pichegru's name in connexion with a plan for proclaiming the King,¹ but this must have been a mistake. On the 13th August 1795, before the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had crossed the river, and when the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was practically motionless, one of the Royalist agents, the Comte de Montgaillard, saw Pichegru at his head-quarters at Altkirch, began negotiations with him, and, according to Montgaillard, placed him in communication with the Prince de Condé. The offers made to the General were something marvellous; he was to be Marshal, Governor of Alsace, to have the *cordon rouge* of Saint-Louis, the *château* and park of Chambord, twelve guns taken from the Austrians, a million in cash, an income of 200,000 livres (say £8,000), and an *Hôtel* at Paris, while the district of Arbois, whence he came, was to bear his name and to be exempt from taxes for fifteen years. The army was to get its rewards. The whole thing reads like a fairy tale, or like one of the gifts Napoleon poured on his Marshals. In return Pichegru was to proclaim the King, to deliver up Huningue, and, joining Condé, to march on Paris.² On the 6th October and the 19th December Condé was communicating his hopes to Mr. Wickham, the English secret agent.³

In the replies reported by the Royalist agents (whom I call the conspirators), as given by Pichegru to these and other overtures made to him, it is difficult to distinguish the passages that we can believe he really meant from those about which he can hardly have been serious, or which the conspirators either misunderstood or interpreted to mean what they wanted them to mean. Where we may be sure we have his own words, as where a Swiss officer, Major Roussillon, reported them to Mr. Wick-

¹ Wickham, i. 85-6.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 550-7; Montgaillard, 44-50.

³ Wickham, i. 186-9, 225-7.

ham, they are sensible enough. Just as earlier he had refused to hand over Huningue on the ground that it would surely be at once lost by the Royalists, he advised caution and postponement till there should be a change in the disposition of the Nation.¹ At first he may have believed in the possibility of carrying his army over to the Royalist cause,² when the troops should be sufficiently disgusted with the mismanagement of the Directory, but later on he saw that this was impossible. Nothing could be done till the armies were beaten, and in this he was consistent, for in May 1796 he was urging an attack by the enemy to crush the army he had led.³ He did not want, he said, to be the third volume of Lafayette and Dumouriez,⁴ but, never a clever man, he did not see that Dumouriez had failed to carry his army with him because he was in the very position in which Pichegru wanted to be placed, that of the commander of a beaten force. Making the troops discontented by placing them under hardships was a possible, if cruel, policy, but to claim credit from the Royalists for having exposed his army to defeat in the open field on the Pfrimm⁵ showed that he did not understand the lesson to be learnt from the fate of Dumouriez. As I have said,⁶ Monk could never have restored the Monarchy in England if he had come draggetailed from a defeat by the French.

The case against him is complicated by his having tried to represent to the enemy that his conduct towards them had been more favourable than one can believe it really was. For instance, in December 1796 he was telling Wickham that in October of that year it had been for treacherous reasons that he had chosen the garrison of Mannheim from the best and most desperate troops of his army, placing them under a man quite incapable of commanding them.⁷ The troops can hardly have been picked,⁸ and, if they were, considering how often in an army the deficiencies of a senior are made good by the coming forward of a junior, it would have been a curious policy to count on a good garrison surrendering easily. Montaignu may have been

¹ Wickham, i. 374-8.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 556.

³ *Ibid.*, iii. 347-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 555.

⁵ Wickham, i. 494.

⁶ Phipps, 159.

⁷ Wickham, i. 494.

⁸ I have not got the composition of the garrison, but it must have been taken from the two divisions there.

incapable, but, when Saint-Cyr objected to his nomination at the time, it was because he was not known by any one, not that he was incapable. In the same way, Pichegru's profession that he had given the enemy a good opportunity of destroying his army, by standing on the Pfrimm to receive battle, is not in keeping with two facts. In the opinion of Saint-Cyr, a very harsh critic, who differed with his dispositions, he was doing his best at the moment according to his lights.¹ Then also, instead of standing to give the enemy the chance of crushing his troops, he retreated on what Saint-Cyr considered 'the pretext' of the retirement of one division,² that is, he ducked to avoid the blow he now professed to have longed for. Also there is even stronger evidence that he was not doing his best for the enemy, for all this time he was pointing out to the Directory the wants of his army, and urging Jourdan to come to his rescue with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Stronger evidence still, he was complaining that the places, Landau for instance, had not received the provisions which were so urgently required.³

The truth is that, if he was acting in bad faith towards his own country, he was placing himself, as I have said, in a position that he would have seen, had he been a cleverer man, to have been impossible. He wished his army to be defeated while he himself should retain his prestige, and how could that be? Here he and Saint-Cyr agree. The French soldier, says the latter, has only contempt for a beaten General: a complete defeat would have annihilated any ascendancy Pichegru might have had.⁴ Just so does Pichegru himself explain to Wickham that he could not have suffered himself to be turned, nor could he have made a clumsy retreat from the Pfrimm, as that would have destroyed his military reputation.⁵ If, after the retreat of Moreau, Pichegru really did hope to regain the command of the army,⁶ then he might have been in the position he aimed at—the army beaten but not its commander. But, as long as he was at the head of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', he was gripped by the necessities of his position. He might throw tit-bits in the jaws of the enemy: he could not give them any really great advantage without

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 264–6.

³ *Ibid.*, 276 note, and 279, 531–3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 267.

⁶ See farther on, after the end of Moreau's retreat.

² *Ibid.*, 301.

⁵ Wickham, i. 494.

weakening himself to an equivalent degree. Even the loss of Mannheim must have lessened his prestige: what would a crushing defeat on the Pfirimm have done? Not even the prestige of Napoleon survived Waterloo. Pichegru's tortuous brain only dimly comprehended the situation, but still he had sufficient capacity to save himself from taking any fatal step.

Two points in the situation must be noted as showing that his enterprise was not entirely a forlorn hope. There was a strong Royalist feeling in the south-east part of France, and a great insurrection was being planned in Franche-Comté, Pichegru's own country, in which we shall find him occupying a high position. The movement was to be begun by throwing the *émigré* army of Condé across the Upper Rhine, and it was to include Lyons, while the Austrian army in Italy was to advance into France and assist, that part of the plan being stopped by Bonaparte, who found them other employment. Mr. Wickham, with the great good sense which seems to have characterized him, prevented his plan from being attempted until circumstances should be propitious, as they never were;¹ and the Directory knew something of it.² Also, there was a growing movement throughout the country of dislike of the Directorial régime, which greatly strengthened the Constitutional and Royalist parties, and which was only crushed at Fructidor in 1797 by the purging of the Councils, carried out by the soldiers of Augereau. While I do not believe there was any considerable Royalist party in the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', still it did not show the sympathy with Fructidor that was expressed so hotly by the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the Armée d'Italie. How far all this movement and the conspiracy of Pichegru went, it is probable we shall never know. Even though we have Wickham's correspondence, he says 'the secret respecting the persons of importance who had committed themselves to support General Pichegru is at this moment, I believe, locked up in my own breast'.³

What was Pichegru's motive? Want of money, answers Saint-Cyr. He had arrived at the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' bringing fine carriages and horses, which he soon had to sell.⁴ Fond of luxury now, his pay was almost nothing, nominally 4,000 francs

¹ Wickham, i.

² Jourdan, 228.

³ Wickham, i. 7.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, ii. 338-9.

a month, but, as this was in *assignats*, it was only worth 100 francs.¹ On the 11th July 1795 when thanking Moreau, his friend and successor at the 'Nord', for the repayment of a debt of fifty louis, but refusing the offer of his purse, he described himself as like a beggar.² Doubts are thrown on the assertions of the Royalist agents that they gave him money, and it is only fair to remember that both Demouge, one of the agents who saw Pichegru, and Wickham say that he never asked them for money, but he must have been certain that he would be offered it, and his personal position must have told on him. On the 16th May 1796 we find him ready to accept money, which, as he put it, could be utilized with other men, and which would enable him to keep some horses he otherwise would sell.³ Then in December 1796, when Wickham proposed to stop sending him funds, we find him for the first time committing himself in his own handwriting and asking that the supply should not be discontinued. That he did receive money is certain, and we find him expressing his satisfaction at the assurances of Wickham that, when he went to Paris, an agent should follow him furnished with the credit he required.⁴

Pichegru has found an able defender for most of his conduct in M. Ernest Daudet,⁵ who succeeds in showing how much some of the charges against him have been exaggerated, and how much falseness and speculation existed among the agents who professed to serve as intermediaries between the General and Condé and Wickham. Such men were only too likely to be venal and little scrupulous. Pichegru's attitude at first may have been, as M. Daudet considers, that of a man trying to be true to his country, but believing the Republican system was breaking down, and willing, if it did, to help to replace the Monarchy on the throne without ceding any territory to the ravenous enemy. M. Daudet refutes many of the ordinary charges such as the appointment of a treacherous governor of Mannheim,⁶ and he fully brings out the difficulties of the general military situation, but he does not, I venture to think, realize the

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, vii. 62 note.

² 'Je suis ici comme un mendiant avec un portefeuille garni' (?), Daudet, *Conjuration*, 28; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 78.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 343, 346-7; Wickham, i. 491 note.

⁴ Wickham, i. 491-2, 495-6.

⁵ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 174-5.

⁶ Wickham, i. 494.

damning evidence about the retention of the starving army in its lines. He thinks he has disproved this by the fact that, when Moreau came to command, he found the troops properly cantoned. This is true, but why? Because, the moment Desaix replaced Pichegru in command, he at once drew back the troops into proper cantonments, as Saint-Cyr had done with his own division.¹ If it be urged that in his parting instructions to Desaix Pichegru stated that the troops must be kept within at least three or four days' march of the front, so that Desaix was given a certain liberty on this point, it must first be answered that Saint-Cyr drew his men ten marches back, and next that, if such a repose could be given on the 5th March 1796, it could as well have been given in January. What explanation can be given for this but that when Pichegru was giving up the command, and the discontent of the troops could be no longer of use to him, then and then only did he relieve them from the pressure he had exerted as long as he could hope to use them for his purpose? That such pressure would drive the troops by famine to more than mere discontent is shown by the fact that in July 1797 Moreau was warning the Directory that, unless they came to the succour of the army promptly, 'it is to be feared that it may yield to the instigation of many enemies of the Government who do not cease to excite it to sedition'.² The disregard of the welfare of his men was the more remarkable in an officer who had in his earlier years been considered by them as their father. There is no wiping out this blot.

Anyhow, whether a traitor or not, Pichegru was not to lead the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in 1796. He was in a very difficult position, for the last campaign had been disastrous, Jourdan complained of his failing to support the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', the Directory was not contented with him, rumours of his recall were spreading, and, although he himself seems to have had no fear on that point, his correspondence with the enemy might be revealed at any moment. On the 3rd November 1795 the Directory had called him to Paris to explain matters, when, unable to leave his army, he had sent the Adjutant-General Abatucci, through whom communications, not always pleasant, had passed. His own feelings can be learnt by his corre-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, 332-4, 340; Daudet, *Conjuration*, 367.

² Daudet, *Conjuration*, 41-2.

spondence with his friend Moreau, commanding the 'Nord'. On the 14th December 1795 he referred to the reports in the newspapers of his recall, saying he had been warned that he would not fail to be removed, as he had told some of the Directory disagreeable truths. On the 10th January 1796 he wrote that he did not count on recommencing hostilities: he had already six times requested to be replaced, and desired it more and more. Using language similar to that which Generals of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' were employing about this time, he said, 'The levity and injustice which I have seen used towards the soldier that is not always successful have given birth in me to a sentiment which it is difficult for me to overcome, disgust'.¹

Next, on the 5th March he seems of his own accord to have sent in his resignation again to the Directory, handing over the command to Desaix,² but, if my dates are correct, he did not leave the army for Paris till the 21st March. On the 25th March the Directory replied, accepting his resignation in most complimentary terms, knowing the need he had of repose, as he had frequently stated, but hoping that, though his arm was tired, his head and heart could still labour for the country: the Directors awaited the opportunity for giving him fresh proofs of their confidence. Then, as he did not accept what must have been the very nominal post of the 'généralat de l'Armée du Midi', they offered him the embassy to Sweden, giving him a month to consider whether he would accept it.³ He had kept all this secret at first, so that it was only in April that the army knew he would not command it any longer.⁴ It was believed he would install his successor, and then pass his month of deliberation at his country-place at Arbois.

At the time it was believed that it was not at his own request that he had been removed, and later it was assumed that the Directory must have had some inkling of his treachery and wished not only to take him away from his army, but also to get him out of the country. Barras, whom I think we may trust on this point, says that this was not so: the two commanders on the Rhine were at variance, Jourdan had been the most docile, and so they preferred to retain him, and the more so because they believed in the sincerity of Pichegru's wish for

¹ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 191-2.

³ *Ibid.*, 215-18, 261.

² *Ibid.*, 367.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 1.

rest. Had they suspected him of treachery, they would not have trusted him with the embassy to Sweden.¹ Carnot, on the other hand, says that he had begun to lose confidence in Pichegru, and when the General had thrice offered his resignation, he proposed to accept it. When Pichegru came to Paris he complained that he had not formally offered his resignation, but had only asked for leave of absence, a statement contradicted by his own letters to Moreau. Then, says Carnot, it was declared that Pichegru was dying of hunger and had to undertake the horsing of diligences at Vesoul, a point to be remembered in judging his pecuniary position if he were not receiving money from Wickham. Carnot got him maintained on the pay of a General, but that was not much.²

Later, in March 1797, we shall find Pichegru asserting that it was only the knowledge of his treachery that made the Directors replace him,³ but not only is this in contradiction to Barras (although little reliance can be put on that writer), but it is also in opposition to his own plans at this time. Hardly had he been replaced than he was hoping to recover his position if Moreau and the army were defeated. Unless the Directory were suddenly to become Royalist, which does not seem to have entered into his anticipations, why should a defeat of the army make them restore a commander they believed to be a traitor? The thing is absurd. Of course, it is impossible to form any consistent explanation of his conduct now. If he wanted to use his army, why did he ask to be replaced, as he told Moreau he had done? On the other hand, if he was acting honestly and retired in disgust, why did he at once want to be restored? It might be argued that he did really retire in disgust, believing nothing could be done for the Royalists, but that, learning at Paris how strong that party was growing in the Councils, he then wished to recover his command. But it is useless to form theories to account for the conduct of so weak and short-sighted a man.

On the 25th March 1796 the Directory appointed Moreau to succeed Pichegru at the head of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle',⁴ and Pichegru went to Paris, where he met Moreau and consulted with the Directory on the next campaign. Pichegru himself

¹ Barras, ii. 86-7.

² Carnot, *Réponse*, 25-6.

³ See end of Chapter XVI and Wickham, ii. 24.

⁴ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 95.

was not treated in the least as a discredited commander : the well-informed Wickham had reported that no surprise need be felt if he were received with greater honours than were shown to Jourdan when he had visited the Capital,¹ and two public dinners seem to have been given to him, at the second of which the principal members of the two Councils were present, as well as Moreau, 'son intime ami'; the German Gazette of Strasbourg announcing this was full of praise of his merit, modesty, and rare talents, and of the unbounded confidence which the Nation and the army felt for him.² Moreau arrived at his headquarters on the 23rd April 1796,³ and Pichegru also returned to Strasbourg on the 1st May, when the two Generals had frequent interviews.

Loath as I am to attribute any far-reaching plan to Pichegru, who usually let himself drift with the current of affairs, it seems as if he was now engaged on a more definite purpose than one would expect. Having got the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' badly placed, so as to give the enemy every chance of cutting in between the two French armies, he then urged them to attack at once, when the French, unprepared as they were, would be crushed,⁴ while he himself would withdraw to the Jura and would not be compromised. After that, owing to the arrangements he had made at Paris, he considered himself certain of being replaced at the head of the army with full powers, and thus of gaining the position in which alone, as I have said, he would be strong, that of a General considered as successful at the head of an army that was beaten when not under him.

It would be interesting to know the real relations between Moreau and his predecessor. In the 'Nord' they had been on intimate terms of friendship, and now in the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' it was believed that Moreau would not have come to it without the approval of Pichegru,⁵ whilst the conspirators naturally assumed that he would be informed of the whole of the plot, and would continue it, a belief made the more probable by the way Pichegru at first hung about the army. I believe that Moreau had no real knowledge of the plot. At first Pichegru advised that no attempt should be made on him, although he believed that he would be disposed for anything, if annoyed by

¹ Wickham, i. 320.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 336.

³ *Ibid.*, i, 5 note.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11, 339-40, 347-9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

the Directory,¹ and on the 2nd May 1796 one of the conspirators wrote, 'Moreau seems "suspect" to me; he has shown impatience to see the departure of Pichegru, who has never spoken highly of him to me, and who assured me strongly that there was no ground for treating with him'.² This probably is right, though of course Moreau might like his hands free, even if he had been given a hint of the plot his predecessor had been engaged in, for, unambitious as he then was, collaboration in the management of an army would soon become intolerable. On the other hand another conspirator, less trustworthy it is true, on the 20th May brought to the Archduke Charles what purported to be notes from Pichegru, urging that the Austrians should attack first, partly to cover Moreau and to save appearances.³ But, if Pichegru, when well established at the head of the army, felt that he could not afford to let himself be lightly defeated, still less is it probable that Moreau, just appointed, would knowingly arrange for a defeat. The Royalists at Paris asserted that, before leaving the Capital, he had promised to support them as far as he could with his army,⁴ but this is hardly credible.

What seems certain is that Pichegru planned, or tried to plan, the approaching campaign with Moreau. Saint-Cyr believed he had at first exercised a sort of tutorship over his successor,⁵ and one of the conspirators, in sending to the Archduke Charles returns of the position of the army, enclosed a sketch of the plan of campaign that Pichegru had traced for Moreau.⁶ It would have been but natural for Moreau to follow his predecessor's advice at first, and it is much in his favour that he should have begun, in Saint-Cyr's opinion, to throw off that evil influence as soon as he found, not only by his own sense, but by the advice of Saint-Cyr, Marceau, and Jourdan, that his army was wrongly placed. On the 24th May Marceau of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', returning from an interview with Saint-Cyr, reported to Jourdan that Saint-Cyr had told him Moreau was not yet master of his army, and that it was to be feared he was influenced by some one jealous of his glory.⁷ When leading Generals of an army talk of such matters, whispers are apt to reach headquarters, and, advised by Jourdan of the danger of his left wing,

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 343.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 348.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 13.

² Daudet, *Conjuration*, 238 note 1.

⁴ Wickham, i. 416.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁷ Maze, 273.

Moreau, as we shall see, began to act for himself just before hostilities recommenced. Then, on or soon after the 17th May, either feeling that he was losing his hold on Moreau, or wishing to avoid being present and so partly liable for the catastrophe he hoped for, Pichegru left for Arbois.¹

The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' received its new commander with much satisfaction, for those officers that had served in the 'Nord' represented him as a good General. He had, as we know, been much employed in that army by Pichegru in 1794 in sieges, but, since succeeding to the chief command, he had not seen any further service with it. He tried to please his new troops, was affable to all, and, like Desaix, affected the most extreme simplicity in his dress, so that even on ceremonial occasions his sword alone distinguished him from a civilian. Against him it was stated that his character was weak and undecided, and, what was perhaps rather a recommendation to some of this army, that his political opinions were uncertain and but little pronounced. How undecided he was, events soon showed. Perhaps Pichegru had prejudiced him in favour of Desaix: anyhow that General soon acquired much influence over him, apparently because the two tended to agree in certain views of action, whilst Saint-Cyr, though listened to, lost rather than gained ground in his favour as time went on. At first, however, Moreau was disposed to follow in the same rut as his predecessor.²

Hitherto the army had consisted simply of a number of divisions, never grouped except for some special purpose. Moreau began by reorganizing it in three corps and a small reserve. Ferino commanded the two divisions of the right wing, 20,366 strong, stretched along the Upper Rhine from Bâle to Lauterbourg. Desaix with the centre, which later became the left wing, 17,334 strong, held Landau and the lines of the Queich. He had two divisions, one of which (Delmas) Oudinot joined in July to take a brigade. Saint-Cyr with the left wing, which later became the centre, 19,939 strong, stretched from near Landau to Limbach³ on the Blies, and thence down the Blies to Neunkirchen, where he communicated with Marceau, the right of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', at Ottweiler and on the left bank of the Nahe. Saint-Cyr had the 7th Division (Duhesme),

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 345.

² Ibid., I-3, 5 note I.

³ West of Homburg.

in which Vandamme from the 'Nord' had a brigade, and the 8th Division (Taponier, the former commander of Soult), in which Lecourbe had a brigade. Bourcier had the small infantry reserve, with Forest's heavy cavalry, 7,464 strong. Only the heavy cavalry regiments were grouped: the rest, Hussars, Chasseurs, and Dragoons, was distributed amongst the divisions. Needless to say, not only the jibbing Saint-Cyr, but Desaix and Ferino also, were horrified at the idea of commanding anything except their own divisions, and they remonstrated. Moreau held firm, and the advantages of the system were soon too manifest even for the scruples of Saint-Cyr to last. The strength of this active part of the army was 65,103, not including a force before Philippsburg, and the garrisons of Strasbourg and of other places, which numbered 12,120.¹

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 7-9, Table 108; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 195-6; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 16-17.

XII

FIRST PHASE OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1796

(May to July 1796)

Possibilities of the situation for the Austrians. Advance and retirement of Jourdan. Battle of Uckerath. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' crosses the Rhine.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

10th May. Battle of Lodi.

13th May. Bonaparte enters Milan.

24th June. Armistice between France and the Pope.

May-July. Completion of pacification of La Vendée by Hoche, and reinforcement of Rhine armies and army of Italy from his troops.

THE campaign of 1796, which now began, is well known, and has been illustrated by many writers. Students have the great advantage of possessing the accounts of two of the leaders, Jourdan and the Archduke Charles, with the invaluable criticisms of Saint-Cyr, as well as the shorter description by Soult. For many matters of detail we have also the works of General Comte Pajol, who, in following the deeds of his illustrious father, provides material of which I make great and constant use throughout this work. Where the student has such excellent guides at his disposal, it is only necessary for me to follow humbly the arguments of the great leaders and to describe the general course of affairs, sacrificing much to give the positions of the different divisions, information that is necessary here, where so many future Marshals and great Generals were in the field.

At the beginning of the campaign the two French armies were in close contact, preparing to act together, and their position can best be understood by first giving that of the enemy. The Austrians were still organized in two armies, one of which, under the fiery old Wurmser, some 82,776 strong, guarded the right bank of the Rhine from Bâle to Mannheim, where its line crossed the river and stretched westwards to Kaiserslautern. On the Lower Rhine, more immediately opposed to Jourdan, the Archduke Charles, who had succeeded Clairfayt, with some 71,076 infantry and 20,702 horse, had his left wing linked with

the right of Wurmser on the left bank. Thence it lay by the Nahe to Kirn, and then nearly due east to Mayence, where it crossed to the right bank. His right wing ran northwards to Altenkirchen below Coblenz, and to the Sieg river. If we take the whole Austrian force as one army, its position is easier to describe as having a short centre on the left bank of the Rhine, facing westwards from Kaiserslautern to the Nahe, while from the northern and southern ends of this front its wings both ran eastwards across to the Rhine and then along the river, the right wing down in front of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and the left up the river in front of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.¹ The line of the two French armies followed that of the enemy, their point of junction being nearly opposite that of the Austrian armies; Marceau, commanding the right of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', was at Birkenfeld, and Saint-Cyr, commanding the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', at Zweibrücken. These two Generals, as I have said, communicated freely; Saint-Cyr, generally cold and reserved, seems to have been touched by the zeal and sincerity of Marceau, a general favourite, and to have been eager to act with and through him.²

The strength and the possibilities of the Austrian position will be seen at a glance, for their centre was driven as a wedge between the two French armies, whilst they could draw troops from the right bank either through Mannheim or through Mayence, both places being behind their centre; and thus they could throw their weight on either of the French forces. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had no means of throwing troops over to the right bank, except by effecting a regular passage in presence of the enemy. Jourdan had the advantage of still holding Düsseldorf on the right bank, and could thus cross without opposition, but only on the extreme left of his line and of the whole French front. He might attempt to pass the main part of his army over the river there, but, before it could make its presence felt by marching up the right bank, the enemy's forces could be thrown on the French on the left bank, just as had been done by Clairfayt in 1795.³

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 167-76; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 7-16; Pajol, i. 285-6; Hamley, 155-86; Vogel, xii, xvii, xxii, xxiii, xxv; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas i, vii.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 12-13; Maze, 270. Marceau had been at Trèves till about the 20th May, Maze, 269.

³ Vogel, xii, xvii, xxii, xxv.

Saint-Cyr, for his part, assumed that this would happen and he marked that, while Wurmser was at Kaiserslautern, the Archduke had formed a camp at Baumholder,¹ so that a mass of the enemy lay like a wedge opposite the point where the left of Saint-Cyr joined the right of Marceau. The thin line that Saint-Cyr presented to such an attack could not have resisted, and an enemy success there would have cut the two armies apart. Wurmser, who had obtained full details about Marceau's force at Ottweiler, was already fixing the 15th June for the date on which he would dine at Strasbourg,² but Saint-Cyr could not get Moreau to reinforce him, for the Commander-in-Chief, acknowledging the justice of his views and promising to be ready to come to his assistance, still feared some attack on his right. Although at one time he placed his small reserve of three regiments behind Saint-Cyr at Hornbach,³ he soon withdrew it in rear of Desaix and the lines of the Queich. Saint-Cyr, believing that Moreau, if he came, would be too late, then tried his usual weapon, offering to resign and to take a division, but, probably knowing this would not be listened to, he got Marceau to write to Jourdan, urging him to ask Moreau to strengthen his left. This stroke succeeded and the reserve came back to Hornbach. It is from this moment, says Saint-Cyr, that Moreau threw off the tutorship which Pichegru had exerted over him, and, as I have said, the latter left Strasbourg, although he was far from ceasing his connexion with the army.⁴

Everything thus seemed to point to a forward movement of the Austrian centre, and this was what the Austrian Government intended. The Archduke and Wurmser were ordered to besiege Landau, throw back the French westwards from the Moselle and from the mountains between the Rhine and the Blies; and then, penetrating into Alsace, to take the fortresses and blockade Strasbourg, even if that operation lasted through the winter. The Archduke disliked this plan, which he described as 'gigantic'.⁵ Wurmser also objected, the reasons in both cases being impossible to understand; and Saint-Cyr remarks that, without the high opinion entertained of the Archduke, he would

¹ East of Birkenfeld.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 349.

³ South of Zweibrücken.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 9-13, 350-68; Maze, 270-83.

⁵ Archduke Charles, ii. 19.

have been tempted to believe that the real reason was that the author of the plan was Clairfayt, who in the campaign of 1795 had not always been in agreement with Wurmser.¹ Certainly the plan ought to have succeeded, especially as the instructions of the French Government tended to direct Moreau's attention to the idea of crossing the Rhine, and Saint-Cyr believed, at least in later days, that the evil influence of Pichegru was exerted to keep the troops of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' drawn out in a long cordon and away from the critical point.²

The Directory had their own plan, a monumental piece of folly, which was signed by Carnot and was sent on the 29th March 1796 to Jourdan and Moreau. Jourdan was to leave in the Hunsrück, that is, between the Nahe and the Moselle, a corps of 25,000 men under Marceau to cover Trèves and the Sarre. Then, debouching by Düsseldorf and Neuwied with his army, he was to march up the right bank of the Rhine to the Lahn. It was assumed that this movement would force the enemy to withdraw from the left of the Rhine, when Moreau was to pursue them to their bridges, and, throwing them on Mayence, to seize part of their artillery and 'even some of their magazines'. In the meantime the corps of Marceau, no longer required in the Hunsrück, would march up the left bank behind the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', to cross the Upper Rhine between Huningue and Strasbourg, whilst Moreau had the simple task of persuading the enemy that this corps, marching south, was intended to reinforce the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Both Moreau and Marceau were absolutely forbidden to accept or risk a battle: they might harass the enemy, but were not to make any general attack. Had the plan been attempted, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' would have been on the right bank in two bodies, separated by the whole mass of the Austrians, whilst the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' either looked on from the left bank or else followed Marceau, the action proposed for that army being very vague.³ Just as both the Austrian Generals had objected to the plan of their Government, the French commanders were equally, but surely with more reason, indisposed to carry out the orders of the Directory.

Meeting at Trèves on the 7th May, Jourdan and Moreau drew up their objections to the scheme of the Directory, and proposed

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 6-7.

² *Ibid.*, 12.

³ Jourdan, 215-31.

natural alterations. In the first place, believing the enemy was about to advance on the left bank of the Moselle, they wished to unite the right of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Also they explained that the direction not to deliver battle on the left bank implied that they must retreat if pressed by the enemy. Then, instead of the wonderful march of Marceau up the river, which would have taken twenty days, they proposed that the passage of the Upper Rhine should be made by the troops of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' under a General better acquainted with the course of the river than was Marceau. Finally, they represented that, as soon as the enemy withdrew from the left bank in consequence of Jourdan's advance on the right bank (especially if the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' also succeeded in crossing), as much as possible of the corps of Marceau in the Hunsrück should be sent over to rejoin Jourdan.¹ Those who believe that Jourdan was indebted to Carnot for directions in the cabinet or in the field should study the plan of the one and the criticisms of the other. It was, however, too late, for, urged on by Pichegru, the Austrians denounced the armistice on the 20th May: hostilities were to recommence on the 1st June, so that Jourdan had to begin his preparations to act as the Directory wished. Thus, at the very moment favourable for an attack on their real centre or linking point, the two armies were to separate, and more than half of Jourdan's troops was to be denied all possibility of preventing a disaster to the force that remained on the left bank.

The 'Sambre-et-Meuse' made the first move. Kléber, with the left wing² (Colaoud and Lefebvre), 21,060 strong, advanced from Düsseldorf and crossed the Wupper at midnight on the 31st May. Thence he marched up the right bank towards the Lahn in order to clear the ground for the crossing of the other divisions. All through the long advance in this campaign the reader must imagine Mortier reconnoitring in front of Lefebvre, and Ney in front of Colaoud. Soult was with Lefebvre, d'Hautpoul followed close with the heavy cavalry, in which Richepanse commanded a regiment and Montbrun³ and Merlin were *sous-*

¹ Jourdan, 232-9.

² For Kléber's instructions see Jourdan, 239-45. For details of the left wing see *Pajol*, i. 281-2; Wouters, 122; Jourdan, 17.

³ Général Baron Louis-Pierre de Montbrun (1770-1812), the future cavalry leader of the Empire. *Fastes*, iii. 416-17; Thoumas, 117-75.

lieutenants. It is curious to think of the fates in store for these men, of whom four were to be Marshals of the Empire. Colaud lived to be a Peer of the Restoration, and had the courage to try to save Ney by speech and vote. He, Lefebvre, and Soult died quietly in their beds. Richepanse won Hohenlinden, if ever one man won a battle, only to die of yellow fever as Governor-General of Guadeloupe. D'Hautpoul died of wounds received at Eylau. Ney and Mortier fell in Paris, the one shot by the Bourbons, the other as one of the victims of Fieschi's attempt on the life of Louis-Philippe. Wide apart run the paths of Glory, and they lead to very different graves.

In this campaign men such as Soult, Ney, and Mortier were being grounded in their work by a number of comparatively small affairs, in which the superiority in numbers of the Austrian cavalry gave the French advanced guards a severe task. No such experience had fallen to the lot of Jourdan, and of others besides him, before they reached the higher ranks. On the 4th June Lefebvre, attacking a position that he knew well, drove the enemy from Altenkirchen, and took 3,000 prisoners, 4 colours, and 12 guns. D'Hautpoul had been wounded, and his place was taken by Richepanse, who, with his arm in a sling, led on the cavalry. At Altenkirchen he now received a sabre cut and had his horse killed under him, but gained from Kléber his promotion to General of Brigade. Ney, with Colaud's light troops, had turned the enemy's left and captured a mass of provisions at Dierdorf. On the 5th June another magazine fell into his hands, and he beat off the garrison of Ehrenbreitstein, which had come out to recapture the stores. By the 6th Kléber's wing was on the Lahn, and Soult reached Weilburg, where a welcome prize of flour and forage was found.¹

Meanwhile Jourdan, still with his right and centre on the left bank of the Rhine, must have had a trying time, for he had to solve a most difficult problem. His army might be described as stretched from the Hunsrück down the left bank to Düsseldorf, and then up the right bank to the Lahn, thus forming a 'U'; while the Archduke, placed at the western head of the letter, could either fall on the French there with his main body,

¹ *Pajol*, i. 291-4; *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 210-13; *Soult*, i. 291-4; *Jourdan*, 28-32; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 29-33; *Thoumas*, i. 121; *Archduke Charles*, ii. 51-5; *Vogel*, xvii.

or else, crossing the river easily and quickly by Mayence, throw himself on Kléber before Jourdan could reinforce his left. Jourdan does not seem to have counted on much support from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Had the Archduke fallen on him, he would have drawn back down-stream to the Moselle, and even across that river to Coblenz, whilst Kléber on the opposite side advanced to the Main. On the other hand, if the Prince weakened himself by sending reinforcements to the body opposing Kléber, then Jourdan intended to attack him on the left bank while Kléber retired down the right.¹ He had already ventured to let Kléber call Bonnard's infantry reserve across from Bonn, when he was relieved from part of his anxiety.²

Now, however, came a change in the situation. While the tried and staid commanders, Jourdan and Moreau, on whom the hopes of the Republic naturally rested, had been consulting and deliberating on the Rhine, the young whipper-snapper to whom the Armée d'Italie, reckoned to be a do-little force, had been given by some freak of the Government, had entered Milan on the 15th May after a series of successes. Much alarmed, the Austrian Government was calling off Wurmser with 25,000 men from the Rhine for Italy, where his zeal and experience no doubt would restore matters. The plan of holding, if not operating from, the left bank, remained good at Vienna; but Kléber's advance for the Lahn gave the Archduke the desired excuse to draw back across the river and to throw all his weight on the right bank. He sent forward the Saxons to join the force opposing Kléber, and his main body passed through Mayence on the 9th and 10th June.³ On the 3rd June Jourdan saw that the enemy was drawing back on Mayence, and he rightly assumed that the Archduke was bound for the Lahn. To follow would have simply led him on Mayence, so he began to hurry troops across to the right bank, leaving on the left only Marceau with the left wing, some 22,322 strong,⁴ to meet any fresh advance from that town.

The *débouché* from Neuwied was cleared as quickly as possible, and on the 6th June Grenier's division crossed in boats. The bridge was then re-established and the divisions of Cham-

¹ Jourdan, 25-6, 33.

² *Pajol*, i. 290-2; *Pajol, Kléber*, 209, 211; Archduke Charles, ii. 54.

³ Archduke Charles, ii. 25-30.

⁴ Jourdan, 17, 33.

pionnet and Bernadotte, with Bonnaud's cavalry reserve, followed over.¹ By the 12th Jourdan himself was at Ober-Hadamar² with his force (48,000) distributed along the Lahn. Bernadotte was on the right from the junction of the Lahn with the Rhine, and Lefebvre was thrown back on the left *en potence* along the Steinbach ravine, linking with Soult at Herborn and on the line of the Dill. Ehrenbreitstein was invested by Bonnard's division.³ The Archduke blames Jourdan for not having more troops on his left, but his Highness was, like Saint-Cyr, a little hard to please, for in September of this year Jourdan did extend his left to Wetzlar, whereon the Archduke broke through his centre and blamed him for thinking too much of his left! And surely in June it was but natural that Jourdan, expecting to be attacked sooner or later by a superior force, should wish above all things to avoid being turned on his right and so cut off from the points at which he could cross the Rhine. Now he remained waiting for ammunition and for the result of his reconnaissances—and he waited too long, as both Soult and the Archduke declare, and as he himself acknowledges.⁴ Still, Kléber had informed him that the enemy had received considerable reinforcements, as seemed natural enough: indeed the Archduke might have explained why, having a shorter distance to march, he did not get up earlier.⁵ No doubt, as Napoleon once told Jomini, one should not always assume that the enemy will do the right thing,⁶ but there is danger in the assumption that he will make an obvious mistake. Also, it is not obvious that Jourdan had much to gain by an advance. The Lahn, with its narrow points of passage, did not lend itself to an attempt to crush the enemy, and, if he did not crush them, all he could do would be to follow them until he met the Archduke coming down with reinforcements. Jourdan's whole advance had been really a threat, and he knew he must retreat when once the Archduke should arrive.⁷ But the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was not playing for itself alone, and every mile the Archduke came down the river to meet it was so much gain for the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.

¹ Jourdan, 17; Lahure, 105.

² North of Weilburg.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 214-15; *Pajol*, i. 294-7; Jourdan, 33-5; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 34; Archduke Charles, ii. 55-6. For the right wing see Maze, 288-312.

⁴ Archduke Charles, ii. 64-74, 152; Soult, i. 294-6; Jourdan, 35-6.

⁵ He acknowledges he lost a day, Archduke Charles, ii. 77.

⁶ Jomini, *Espagne*, 83.

⁷ Jourdan, 43.

Moreau also delayed after his crossing, but the cases are different, for the passage of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was of no use if it did not lead to an advance: that of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was effectual if it brought the Archduke away from Moreau.

The Archduke had now two courses open to him. The bold one was to recross to the left bank, throw himself on Marceau, and thus force the two French armies apart: this would have recalled Jourdan. The weaker course was to draw back to the right bank in order himself to meet and check Jourdan. It was on the latter course that he decided¹ and it must be admitted that in doing so he showed a serious lack of consideration for a scientific opponent! Not only was Saint-Cyr grieved at the mistake in strategy, but he suffered also another disappointment about Kaiserslautern. He had got information that Wurmser was about to advance against him, and he therefore obtained permission for his cherished stroke on that post. On the 9th June he was on the way there, promising himself to show what skill could do where the raw Hoche had failed in 1794, when the situation changed, and Wurmser began to draw back on Mannheim, and to prepare for his march to Italy. The consequent withdrawal of the Austrians from Kaiserslautern was so rapid that Saint-Cyr captured a few stragglers only, a poor substitute for his long-dreamt-of attack.

I must first follow the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in its operations against the Archduke, and then return to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Jourdan finally fixed his advance for the 17th June. Soult, far north at Herborn, was sending in reports that the enemy was massing round Wetzlar on the left of Jourdan. He complains that these reports were slighted,² but Jourdan seems to have paid rather too much attention to them, for, while he could have attacked on the 15th, he delayed in order to give himself time to send Lefebvre forward on Wetzlar to cover his left flank. On the 15th June Lefebvre accordingly advanced and drove back the enemy on Wetzlar, but ended by having what was the worst day of his life. Soult had informed him that the enemy had driven the post at Werdorf back on Greifenstein,³ so Lefebvre marched with most of his force northwards on Werdorf. About 4 p.m. the Archduke came up with large reinforce-

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 16-20, 367-9; Maze, 293-309; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 198-200.

² Soult, i. 296-7.

³ Pajol, i. 298.

ments and attacked him. Lefebvre had weakened himself by detachments to cover his right flank and had under his hand only six battalions and as many squadrons, yet with these he sustained a severe struggle along the Dill, but had to retreat, Richepanse with the cavalry covering him, until at night he re-occupied his former positions. With from 6,000 to 7,000 men he had fought some 15,000, and had lost two guns and a howitzer: the enemy claimed seven guns and a colour. A fall from horseback had placed Lefebvre *hors de combat*.¹ What saved him was the unreadiness of the Austrians, who, instead of taking him in rear by Leun, only assaulted that point with a small force. This day, with the affairs to be recounted, in which Mortier and Soult were concerned, seems to me one of the occasions on which the Archduke throws his net with much flourish and explanation to the world, but with the most meagre results.²

Lefebvre's retreat had placed Soult at Herborn in desperate straits, and had endangered Colonel Mortier, who was holding Weilburg. Mortier, informed of the withdrawal of the division, marched westwards for Merenberg, and, although he was surrounded several times by the enemy, he cut through them and regained the division.³ Soult was farther off and, as the enemy was between him and the army, no message of recall reached him, although on the 15th June his scouts brought him news of the fight on the Lahn. Next day he heard that some 4,000 of the enemy were at Gladenbach, east of him, and had pushed out patrols to Dillenburg, threatening his flank and rear, so he marched on Dillenburg with a small force, but, ascertaining from the movements of the Austrians that he was about to be attacked by superior numbers, fell back on Herborn. Already the enemy's cavalry barred the road to Hachenburg, which was now his way to safety, and three columns were about to fall on him. Too impatient to wait, the first body, 4,000 strong, at once threw themselves on him, announcing that they wished to have the glory of capturing him before the others came up. Soult formed his brigade in squares in échelon, so that, whilst they

¹ Ney, i. 102.

² *Pajol*, i. 297-300; Jourdan, 56-7; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 37-9; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 185-8, reading 'Juin' for 'Juillet' p. 186; Archduke Charles, ii. 79-82.

³ *Pajol*, i. 300. I think he had two companies of light infantry and fifty horse, *Pajol*, i. 295.

protected one another by their fire, they could also receive his small body of cavalry, apparently 100 Chasseurs.¹ Then he set off for a march of six miles across an open country.

Finding their summons received with shots, the enemy charged time after time, hoping, if they could not break in, at least to wear out his men: his progress consequently was very slow. At last, as he beat off the seventh charge, Colonel Ney rode in at the head of fifty Hussars, sent by Kléber with the order to retreat. Ney engaged the enemy's cavalry, but his horse fell under him, wounded by a round of case, and three *émigrés* threw themselves on him, summoning him at peril of his life to cry, 'Vive le Roi!'. 'Vive la République!' returned Ney, cutting one of them down. Then, remounting, he drove off the others. Small as his party was, its appearance had told on the Austrians, who naturally believed it was but the forerunner of stronger reinforcements. Night also was coming on and, as they had lost heavily, they drew off, allowing Soult to reach Hachenburg. Here he found Bastoul sent out to meet him with a party from Colaud, as ordered by Kléber. Finally he rejoined the division at Altenkirchen, Ney going off to report to Kléber.² One wonders if this affair, which ought to have bound the two future Marshals together, could have been the beginning of their enmity. Soult was proud of having got clear, and his return, which had been despaired of, was celebrated as a success. Any suspicion that Ney had claimed too great a share in the day might have angered Soult.

Jourdan accepted the defeat of his left as final, and by 8 p.m. on the 16th June the army had its orders to retire down the right bank of the Rhine. He had no reason for remaining to accept battle with the superior forces of the Austrians: the immediate object of his advance, the recall of the Archduke to the right bank, and the consequent cessation of pressure on the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' farther up the river, had been obtained, and, as the Archduke acknowledges, he did better service to France by preserving his army intact, ready to advance again as soon as the Archduke should be drawn off by the passage of Moreau, than by standing for certain defeat.³ He had to be prepared

¹ Soult, i. 295.

² Soult, i. 297-9; *Pajol*, i. 300-1; Ney, i. 103-5; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 190; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 41.

³ Archduke Charles, ii. 95-6.

for three eventualities : the enemy might throw his whole weight on Düsseldorf, and so destroy his hold on the right bank, or they might cross at Coblenz under the protection of the fort of Ehrenbreitstein, or the Archduke might turn back for Mayence, to cross again to the left bank and resume his position between the two French armies.¹ Jourdan accordingly marched for Neuwied with his centre, the divisions of Bernadotte, Championnet, and Grenier, and the infantry reserve of Bonnard, soon joined by the cavalry reserve of Bonnaud. Just as in 1795 the bridge at Neuwied had been broken, so now the Austrians sent down rafts with the same result, and the army had to halt till on the morning of the 18th June the bridges were re-established and the centre crossed, Bonnard going on for Bonn and Cologne. Meantime Bernadotte, with all the cavalry and one infantry regiment, kept off the enemy, eventually accomplishing his own passage without losing a man : the coolness of this rearguard and the precision of its manœuvres were specially praised by Jourdan.²

While Jourdan had carried off his centre without any loss, it was different with his left, which he had sent down the right bank for Düsseldorf. Kléber had orders to regulate his movements by that of the enemy force which was following. If they weakened themselves to turn back for Mayence, then Kléber was to stop his retreat, and even to take the offensive,³ in which case Jourdan, of course, intended to support him. French Generals did not always follow the instructions of their commanders as loyally as the lieutenants of Wellington did, and Kléber, 'who did not like retreats',⁴ chose to stand at Uckerath to receive, or rather to deliver, battle. His apologists profess that, if he had not done this, he might have been driven into the Sieg,⁵ a reason which he himself does not give.⁶

On the 19th June 1796 occurred what may well be called the battle, and that a severe one, of Uckerath.⁷ Professing that he was attacked, Kléber soon threw himself against the enemy on

¹ Jourdan, 58.

² Jourdan, 37-40; *Pajol*, 301-8; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 188-91; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 39-42; Lahure, 110; Archduke Charles, ii. 83-6. For the positions of this centre after passing the river, see *Pajol*, i. 308.

³ Jourdan, 246.

⁴ Soult, i. 301.

⁵ *Pajol*, i. 303.

⁶ Kléber in Jourdan, 247-51.

⁷ South-east of Hennef and of Siegburg, Vogel, xvii.

the hill in front of him. Giving Bastoul the right and Leval the left column, he himself led the centre instead of Lefebvre, who had not yet recovered from his injuries : Soult was detached on the right of the Sieg to guard the left and rear. 'General Soult', said Kléber, 'has given too many proofs of his intelligence and courage in his retreat from Herborn to make General Kléber think it necessary to enter into fuller details', than a short order to maintain severe discipline, and to multiply his forces by his activity.¹ Colaud's division was kept in reserve, but I take it that it was its cavalry which fought under Ney, and was part of the horse led by Richepanse, who was now commanding Lefebvre's divisional cavalry.

Ney led the way across the ravine which divided the forces, at the head of four squadrons of Dragoons. After clearing the space at a trot, and ascending the heights on the other side, he was charged by the Austrian cavalry, but Richepanse came up with the rest of the horse and put the enemy to flight. Meanwhile Kléber arrived with his infantry. Kray, who commanded the enemy, had scattered his 14,000 men, and Kléber for some time made good progress, capturing a gun. He himself led on his column, whilst Bastoul and Leval supported him, but Kray brought up fresh troops and at last Kléber had to retire to his former position. Ney now did good service by putting himself at the head of the 14th Dragoons and checking the Austrian advance, for Kray was pressing the infantry hard. The losses on both sides had been severe, and Kléber mentioned Richepanse as leading the cavalry, supported by Adjutant-General Ney. Sorbier, then Colonel, the future artillery General of the Empire, also distinguished himself. Colonel and Adjutant-General Mortier must have been present, but is not specially mentioned.²

Both sides claimed the victory, Kléber because he had checked Kray and secured an unmolested retreat, and the Austrians because they had beaten off the French; but Kléber, not a very stable man, was much impressed by the day. Believing he had fought 40,000 men, he called on Jourdan for reinforcements to enable him to hold Düsseldorf, and he also wanted

¹ *Pajol*, i. 302-3; Soult, i. 300-1.

² Kléber in Jourdan, 247-51, and Jourdan himself, 40-3; *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 217-19; *Pajol*, i. 302-8 with defence of Kléber; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 191-3; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 42-3; Soult, i. 301; Archduke Charles, ii. 86-91.

a light cavalry division.¹ The Archduke, who thought Kléber was carrying out the instructions of Jourdan, praises him not only for the moment he chose for his attack, when his opponent had scattered his forces, and for the timing of his retreat, but even for not employing Colaud, because if he had beaten Kray he would then have met the Archduke coming up. One would have thought a sudden blow with the whole force, followed by an immediate retreat, would have been best under the circumstances.² Jourdan, on the other hand, was much annoyed. The number of killed and wounded he considered a pure loss due to disobedience of his instructions: he had never intended a backstroke to be delivered unless the enemy weakened himself, and, although he let the Directory believe that Kléber had acted according to his orders, he told the General how much he disapproved his conduct. Himself the least jealous of commanders, and even at this moment sacrificing himself for Moreau, he writes under the belief that Kléber would have liked to win a battle whilst the main body was retiring.³ Perhaps some bitterness on his part comes from the later dispute with Kléber, but, as in the case of Soult and Ney, one wonders whether this was the beginning of the breach between the two Generals who had for so long been close friends. Only a few days before, the Directory, in praising Kléber's conduct during the advance ('the brave troops you lead know that you will always lead them to victory'), had told him that Jourdan had informed them that the success was due to his sagacity, the activity of his dispositions, and the happy and brilliant talent which distinguished him, whilst Kléber in reply modestly said that, 'guided by a great master, seconded by the indefatigable zeal of the Generals, and the most astonishing valour of the troops under my orders', little had remained for him to do.⁴ It would have been fortunate for the two Generals and for France had they both retained the same sentiments. As it was, the left wing continued its retreat undisturbed. Soult covered its proper left, and Kléber told him that he hoped the retreat of the wing would be as brilliant as his own from Herborn.⁵ On the 22nd June Düsseldorf was reached under the command of Colaud, as Kléber had gone on ahead, and Lefebvre, who had been suffering all through the

¹ Jourdan, 249-51.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 86, 90-1.

³ Jourdan, 41.

⁴ Pajol, *Kléber*, 216.

⁵ Soult, i. 301.

retreat from his fall on the 15th was no longer able to lead even his own division.¹

Meanwhile the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', relieved from pressure by the Archduke's march, wheeled its left wing round eastwards, so that Saint-Cyr now lay along the Rhine in prolongation of the line of the rest of the army, communicating with Marceau, who had advanced to the Nahe. On the 14th and 20th June attacks made by Desaix, supported by Saint-Cyr, on the *tête-de-pont* of Mannheim served to amuse the enemy. Saint-Cyr, placed temporarily in command of Desaix's troops as well as of his own, was now ordered to draw back from Alsenborn and Kaiserslautern, and the Austrians in his front were astonished in their turn to see his men in full retreat up the Rhine. The Generals of the enemy, puzzled by the movement, crowded to the front and naturally concluded that the French also were sending reinforcements to Italy. In reality, on the night of the 24th June, Moreau, who had appeared in front of Mannheim as if that was his point, had begun the passage of the Rhine by Strasbourg; part of Saint-Cyr's troops were already on the march, moving by the valleys of the Vosges for concealment, with routes made out for Belfort, and gradually all his force was put in motion, the cavalry posts alone being kept unchanged till the last moment.²

Moreau managed his crossing with the alternate fits of energy and lethargy that were his characteristic, and, partly by his own skill and partly from the advance of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' to the Lahn, he had but a small force of the enemy, the contingent of Suabia, opposite his chosen place. One of Desaix's divisions was sent up the river to Strasbourg from Mannheim, as if for Italy, with its halts prepared as far as Besançon, while Saint-Cyr was reinforced, and masked the movement opposite Mannheim, and then in his turn followed up and across the river. On the 23rd June 1796 the first divisions arrived at Strasbourg, which the Generals, Moreau and Desaix, also reached, by posting. That afternoon the gates of the town were shut and the preparations were pushed forward. At midnight the crossing began. Captain Savary, the A.D.C. of Ferino, was charged with

¹ *Pajol*, i. 310.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 23-8; Maze, 314-20; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 198-205; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 97-9.

a false attack with one battalion to draw off attention from the real point. The night was dark and the current rapid : one boat got aground, others were carried down the river, and Savary reached the shore with only a few boats. His party was so weak that he was overpowered, and was too happy to regain the left bank. Still, he had succeeded in attracting attention.¹ An attempt at another demonstration for a crossing below at Gamsheim failed from the height of the river, whilst at Strasbourg the divisions under Desaix (in chief command) and Ferino passed the river and surprised the enemy, Kehl being taken.² The first phase of the campaign was now over. Jourdan, having crossed the Rhine, had been obliged to re-cross. What had decided his retreat was the calculation that the Archduke had a superiority of 16,000 men.³ Now Jourdan had left Marceau's wing of 22,322 men on the left bank by order of the Directory,⁴ so it is probable that, if he had been permitted to bring his left wing over to the right bank with him, he would have been able to win a personal triumph by holding his ground on the Lahn. But he had been successful in the main object of his advance, for it had enabled the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to make good its landing on the right bank, and both armies, widely separated it is true, now held a means of crossing.⁵ The Directory was satisfied, and Carnot declared that the movement, although retrograde, had produced the effect planned with Jourdan in Paris. In a happy moment Carnot saw also that it would be fortunate for the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' if the Archduke did advance to Düsseldorf. Had the operations of the two French armies been guided by one hand, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' would have attempted to cross about the 12th or 13th June, when the Archduke with his reinforcements was arriving on the Lahn. This would have recalled the Archduke, and Jourdan, following on his traces, would in his turn have prevented the whole of the Archduke's attention from being directed to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Moreau, however, never acted except for his own benefit, and it will be seen that it was not till the night of the 23rd June, that is, the

¹ Savary, i, Part i, 10-11.

² *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 51-67; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 203-11; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 100-2; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 26-40; Philebert, 141; *Boulart*, 21.

³ Jourdan, 38.

⁴ Wouters, 119. The Directory said at least 30,000 were to be left, Jourdan, 216, 219-20, 237-8.

⁵ Jourdan, 252-4, 257.

day after Jourdan's left wing reached Düsseldorf, that he began his own crossing. By this delay he had lost part of the advantage he should have obtained from Jourdan's advance, for the Archduke, once assured that Jourdan had recrossed to the left bank by Neuwied, began on the 21st June to send troops up the river, accompanying them himself. Hearing at Wallmerod ¹ on the 26th June that Moreau was over, he hurried south to attack him. His personal position had altered, for hitherto he had been commanding alongside of Wurmser, who had the Austrian army of the Upper Rhine. On the 18th June Wurmser preceded by large reinforcements, 25,330 men, had marched for Italy, and Latour, who replaced him, passed under the orders of the Archduke. The Austrian commander, therefore, now had the advantage of a single command, though with a much reduced army. He left Wartensleben with 25,351 infantry and 10,933 cavalry (say, 36,284 men), to oppose Jourdan, in addition to 27,000 men in Mayence and Hechtsheim.² Altogether the Prince had 151,334 men placed between Jourdan, who had some 77,792, and Moreau, who had some 79,592.³

I pass over the first fighting necessary to clear the front of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Desaix played the chief part, while the divisions of Saint-Cyr were coming up, and the last of the troops crossed on the 29th June. Saint-Cyr, once over, had been ordered to march with his two divisions nearly due east for the foot of the hills, where his wing would have been in its proper place on the left of Desaix. It was believed at the time that the Archduke would make a struggle for the Rhine valley, where he would come on Saint-Cyr. Now Desaix disliked mountain warfare and, as we have seen, had almost always fought in the Rhine valley by the river. At his request, as Saint-Cyr always believed, Moreau made an extraordinary change in the position of the army, and Saint-Cyr, already at his post waiting for his divisions, found they had been ordered to Offenbourg at the mouth of the Kinzig valley, while the divisions of Desaix marched on his left, so that he now became the centre and Desaix the left; an extraordinary shift to make in presence of

¹ North-west of Limburg on the Lahn, Vogel, xvii.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 33-4, 96-7, 124; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 169-71.

³ Wouters, 123; Jourdan, 17; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii, Table 106; Archduke Charles, ii. 24, deducting 25,330, see *ibid.*, 27. From these figures must be deducted the losses since hostilities began.

the enemy, when every moment was valuable if the army was to take advantage of the surprise of the crossing. Also delay was caused by a sort of reorganization; many regiments had got mixed in the confusion of the passage and Moreau now detailed them afresh to divisions.¹

Desaix now faced down-stream, and Ferino up-stream; Saint-Cyr was working amongst the hills on the right bank, as he had loved to do on the left. Instead of pressing on eastwards to cut the enemy in two, Moreau naturally thought most of the danger to his wings from the enemy forces coming up and down the river, and Saint-Cyr was meant to support either Ferino or Desaix. The Austrian troops had been forced back in a semi-circle as Moreau slowly advanced. The *émigré* corps of Condé had been above at Riegel,² where on the 28th April 1796 the King, Louis XVIII, driven from Venice by the advance of Bonaparte, had arrived.³ The presence of Louis annoyed the Austrian Government, and at the end of June it brutally notified him that, if he did not leave the army at once, it would use force. Meanwhile the *émigrés* were in high spirits, for Condé believed that the French in front of him might yet be won over by Pichegru. The Duc de Berry was given the command of the cavalry, and the Duc d'Enghien, already frequently visiting his love, the Princess de Rohan-Rochefort, at Ettenheim (where in 1804 he was to be arrested), had the *avant-garde*.

The situation seemed to invite a rapid blow at one or other of the bodies of the enemy, but Moreau moved languidly. While his right moved eastwards, he turned north with his left and centre to deal with Latour, who was coming up the right bank from Mannheim for the Murg, while the Archduke was also hastening up to join Latour. It was only on the 5th July that Moreau attacked Latour on the Murg, and in an affair at Rastatt⁴ forced the Austrians over the river, when Latour retired to Ettlingen,⁵ at the foot of the hills. There the Archduke joined him with twenty-four battalions and thirty-nine squadrons and prepared to attack Moreau. On the other hand,

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 39-53; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 100-2; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 211-18; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 67-70, 104-14.

² Riegel, about fourteen miles north-west of Freiburg, Vogel, xxv.

³ Daudet, *Émigration*, i. 363-4; Bittard des Portes, 241-2; De Rison, iii. 39-45; Wickham, i. 346-9.

⁴ North of Baden, Vogel, xxii.

⁵ South of Karlsruhe.

Moreau, after a consultation with Desaix and Saint-Cyr at Renchen¹ determined to attack the Archduke with Desaix's left wing in the plain, while his centre, in the hills, opened the route either to the upper Neckar or to the Danube. On the 5th Desaix, under the eye of Moreau, with the divisions of Sainte-Suzanne (late Beaupuis) and Delmas, in which Oudinot had a brigade, the reserve of Bourcier, and the cavalry and horse artillery of Saint-Cyr's corps, which could not be used by that commander amongst the mountains, fought the battle of Ettlingen or of Malsch. Desaix was thrown back, and in the evening the Archduke was advancing, when news of the success of Saint-Cyr in the hills above him brought him to a stand.² This check to Desaix might have had very serious consequences, for the Archduke, flushed with success against Jourdan, was in a very winning humour.³ He was striking at Moreau's point of passage, and any further advance of his would have brought the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in full rush back for its bridges; but Saint-Cyr in the hills had had his victory, which he describes, with all respect be it said, in the style of a cat purring over its capture of an agile mouse.

On the 2nd July Saint-Cyr, moving north, was at Oberkirch in the Rench valley, and his troops captured the positions of the enemy on the Kniebis mountain, some 3,000 feet high to the east.⁴ Next day, moving up the valley to Oppenau, his troops took Freudenstadt at the head of the Murg valley. He had cut through the Austrian position, separating Frolich up the river from the Archduke and throwing open Württemberg and all Suabia to the French. The road to the Danube was clear: Moreau, however, now ordered him to attack the whole line of the Murg valley and, coming down the right of that stream, to assist Desaix in his crossing of it. This was done on the 5th July, when Taponier took Gernsbach. Then, having first directed Saint-Cyr to support the left of Ferino, Moreau recalled him for an attack on the left of the Archduke, while Desaix advanced, as we have seen, in the valley.

Duhesme was left to guard the Kniebis and Freudenstadt,

¹ East of Strasbourg.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 138-49; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 220-33; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 64 note 1, 81-7; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 126-8, 132-5; Vogel, xxii; Saint-Cyr, *Atlas* viii; Jomini, *Rév.*, *Atlas* xiv.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 68-81.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, *Atlas* ix.

and Saint-Cyr collected twelve of his battalions, with six of the reserve added by Moreau, at Gernsbach in the Murg valley. Opposite to him was the Archduke's left under Kaim, on the hills between the Murg and Enz valleys, while a body of Saxons was advancing from the north-east up the Enz to turn his right. To deal with the latter, Taponier, with six battalions and some cavalry, was sent on the 9th July across the hills into the Enz valley, where he caught the Saxons unprepared and threw them down the Enz, while Saint-Cyr with the brigades of Lecourbe and Lambert marched east to Loffenau, and then north to where Kaim was posted at Rothenzholl.¹ Reconnoitring the position, Saint-Cyr found it too strong for direct attack and determined to try to draw the enemy out of it. Attack after attack was made by his men, who were ordered to retire as soon as strongly opposed; each time the party used was strengthened and pushed farther home. When the fifth attack was made by a whole regiment, the enemy, now thoroughly confident, tried not only to beat back but to surround the column. The French with some difficulty, and only by the personal intervention of Saint-Cyr, were induced to fall back quickly under the cover of the grenadiers of the division massed under Lecourbe. This time the enemy came right down, and Saint-Cyr launched Lecourbe on one flank and his reserve on another, to throw them back, while in the centre a fresh attack advanced. The enemy were followed right into their position and were attacked before they could reform. The fire was so heavy that Lecourbe's grenadiers were shaken, and nearly caused their General to be taken prisoner, but the Austrians were at last forced to retreat with the loss of two guns and a thousand men.²

This account has an interest for English readers, for General Foy describes how in the Peninsular War he saw a series of attacks, similar but planned seriously, made on a body of English with a very different result, for the English, waiting each time until their foes got close up, fired and charged, sending the French back in confusion: then, recalled by their officers, they stolidly retook their position. One can fancy how intensely annoyed Saint-Cyr would have been, if he had been met in this style.

The next move gives an opportunity for checking the value

¹ North-west of Dobel, and south of Langenalb.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 68-81; *ibid.*, Atlas viii and x; Vogel, xxii, xxiii.

of Jomini's opinion. If we take into consideration only the French forces opposed to the Archduke and disregard both Ferino and the enemy in front of him, Moreau's right had beaten the Archduke's left in the mountains, while in the plain by the river the Archduke's right had beaten Moreau's left. Jomini believed that, if the Archduke had concentrated against Moreau's left by the river, he might have driven it back, leaving Saint-Cyr in a dangerous position in the mountains.¹ Saint-Cyr, on the other hand, believed that Moreau should have struck at once through the mountains by Freudenstadt in order to debouch on the Neckar, forestalling the mass of the Archduke's army, or else to surround Frolich and the enemy's left wing.² The Archduke apparently agreed with Saint-Cyr and hastened eastwards for Pforzheim, where he halted to evacuate his magazines. Moreau, not imagining that the Rhine valley would be abandoned so easily, waited in his slow way near Ettlingen, and then prepared an attack on Pforzheim for the 15th July; but on the previous day the Archduke had marched eastwards. We may take both Saint-Cyr and the Archduke as disagreeing with Jomini. The situation was now to be affected by the advance of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and I must therefore return to that Army.

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 233-4.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 87-8; *ibid.*, Archduke Charles, ii. 148-9.

XIII

THE ADVANCE INTO GERMANY

(June to August 1796)

The 'Sambre-et-Meuse' reaches Amberg. The Directory's plan. Ney as an advanced-guard leader.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

5th August. Bonaparte's victory at Castiglione.

" " Secret supplement signed to treaty of Bâle between France and Prussia.

ONCE assured that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had a hold on the right bank, Jourdan lost no time, for on the 28th June Kléber once more emerged from Düsseldorf with the left wing, and the march on the Lahn was repeated. The divisions of the centre again crossed the Rhine in succession and joined Kléber. Grenier and Bonnard's infantry reserve passed at Cologne, on the 28th June; Championnet and Bernadotte at Neuwied on the night of the 1st July, followed by Poncet, who was this time withdrawn from the right wing and sent to blockade Ehrenbreitstein. On the 2nd July Bonnaud with the cavalry reserve came over at Bonn. Jourdan now took command, having all his army this time on the right bank, except 12,800 under Marceau watching Mayence, the garrison of which was in an enterprising mood.¹ By the 7th July the army was once more on the Lahn, having by order of the Directory moved farther from the Rhine than in its previous march in June.²

I have not dwelt on certain alleged faults in the advance, by which it is said Jourdan missed opportunities of crushing Wartensleben, for such matters belong to the great might-have-beens, and were liable to be altered by any chance occurrence. The Archduke has made certain criticisms on the way in which Jourdan threw forward his left and kept away from the Rhine, but the Prince did not know that this was done by order of the

¹ Maze, 328-47.

² Jourdan, 48-65; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 264-72; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 164-84; Pajol, i. 314-24; Pajol, *Kléber*, 219-22; Archduke Charles, ii. 150-63.

Directory.¹ In like manner I have not given details of the constant fighting which took place during the advance, as the Austrians steadily retired, forced back, but not very hard hit on any occasion. Bernadotte had had to fight to get over at Neuwied, and Ney, heading the advance of Colaud, had had many engagements with the enemy's cavalry. When Colaud on the 30th June was checked by the swollen Sieg, the bridges of which the enemy were destroying, Kléber sent Ney with a Chasseur regiment to swim the stream. Ney got across and saved the bridge of Boissdorf, pursuing, with other cavalry, as far as Uckerath.² Lefebvre had his own separate fight. Moving well on the left of the army through Siegen for Dillenburg, he had come on Kray holding a strong position at Wilnsdorf. On the 4th July 1796 Lefebvre attacked in four columns: two Adjutant-Generals, Gardanne and Mortier, commanded the right and centre, while General Soult was entrusted with the left and was told to 'attaquer avec audace'. Lefebvre in person turned Kray's right. It took from 3 p.m. till night to dislodge Kray from his position, but 600 prisoners were taken, and Wartensleben, alarmed for his right, retreated hastily to the Lahn, so that Soult next day was once more close to Herborn.³

The army crossed the Lahn on the 9th July and pressed on. Wartensleben stood by order of the Archduke at Friedberg,⁴ in order to shield Frankfurt, but on the 10th July he was driven back by Lefebvre and Colaud, Richepanse and Ney following in pursuit: in fact Ney was now constantly showing, as Jourdan says, 'much valour and intelligence' and 'charging with the greatest intrepidity'.⁵ Leading a vanguard, he could engage of course with a fair prospect of support, but he required something more than daring. The Austrian cavalry was good and numerous, and a careless or a rash leader might easily have ruined the small bodies that Ney usually commanded.

While Jourdan with the mass of the army advanced in the plain by the Rhine, Kléber with the left wing moved on Frankfurt, in front of which Richepanse and Ney arrived on the 12th

¹ Archduke Charles, ii. 152-4; Jourdan, 79 note 1.

² Pajol, i. 318-19; Jourdan, 52; Ney, i. 123-7.

³ Pajol, i. 322-3; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 180-2; Jourdan, 60-1; Soult, i. 304-5; Michaud, lxxiv. 436; Vogel, xii, xvii.

⁴ About half-way between Giessen and Frankfurt, Vogel, xviii.

⁵ Jourdan, 69, 70; Ney, i. 126-32; Pajol, i. 326-9.

July. Kléber began a bombardment, damaging many houses as well as the walls of the Judengasse, or Jews' quarter. In 1795 Frankfurt, being held by the Prussians as a neutral town, had been out of Jourdan's reach, but now it was garrisoned by the Austrians. The municipality tried to get Kléber to hold his hand until they could induce the Archduke to order the evacuation of the town, but this Kléber would not do, assuring them that the Republic regarded Frankfurt as the most implacable, and at the same time as the most ridiculous, of its enemies. On the evening of the 13th July the bombardment set fire to a great part of the town, and next day Adjutant-General Mortier was sent in to settle terms for the surrender which the garrison was now offering. An armistice was granted by which the French were to enter on the 16th July.¹ Meantime the whole active army assembled round Frankfurt, where Colaud's men luxuriated in enormous cherry orchards, 'never', says Gunner Bricard, 'had we seen so many'.²

I have said the active army was round Frankfurt, for Jourdan had divided his force, and this moment may be taken as the definite parting of the two bodies, which were not to meet again until Jourdan fell back here in September. When the Archduke on the 14th July, unable to drive back the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', had retired from Pforzheim for the Danube, he had left 30,000 men in the garrisons on the Rhine (15,000 infantry and 1,200 horse in Mayence, 3,000 infantry in Ehrenbreitstein, 8,800 infantry and 300 horse in Mannheim, and 2,500 infantry in Philippsburg). While Jourdan nominally had only to look after Mayence and Ehrenbreitstein, he really was also concerned with Mannheim, for Moreau in advancing had left only about 2,800 infantry and 240 horse to observe both Mannheim and Philippsburg.³ Jourdan could not leave so large a force in his rear, so he entrusted the blockade of Mayence and of Ehrenbreitstein to Marceau, giving him a force of 28,545 men (the right wing and Bonnard's infantry reserve). Marceau placed his head-quarters on the right bank at Wiesbaden.⁴

¹ *Pajol*, i. 330-3; Jourdan, 77-8; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 196-200; Archduke Charles, ii. 198-9.

² Bricard, 205. Bricard served in the division of Colaud (Collot, he calls him) with Ney.

³ Archduke Charles, ii. 176; iii. 132.

⁴ Jourdan, 82-5, giving the distribution of the force. For Marceau see Maze, 347-62; Lahure, 111-12.

Jourdan has been criticized for leaving so large a force: Jomini alleges several times that he left from 7,000 to 8,000 men before the inaccessible fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, which had a garrison of only 2,500 men,¹ while Saint-Cyr, comparing the small force left by Moreau with that detached by Jourdan, says that 'rien de bien fâcheux' happened in consequence.² Jomini confuses the distribution before Ehrenbreitstein, which really was held by 3,000 men:³ Poncet, who watched it, had only 4,504 men, and besides the fortress he had to guard the bridges at Neuwied and to escort the convoys coming up the right bank to the Main, so that it was a force at most equal to the garrison that it contained.⁴ As for Saint-Cyr's remark, it is a question of what one calls 'bien fâcheux'. The garrisons, it is true, to the disappointment of the Archduke, remained on the whole strangely quiet,⁵ but that of Mannheim, with the help of other troops, came down on the communications of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and on the 18th September actually succeeded in capturing Kehl, the *tête-de-pont* of Strasbourg. As the Austrians took to plundering instead of guarding their conquest, the French succeeded in regaining the place. One would have thought this was 'bien fâcheux', and Moreau, grown anxious, had already sent back troops for his base. Indeed the state of the communications was already so grave that it alone, Saint-Cyr considered, would have sufficed to force Moreau, then far in Germany, to draw back on the Rhine.⁶

The garrison of Mayence could easily and quickly throw their weight on one or other side of the river as suited them: indeed much the same might be said as to the Main on the right bank. The French, it is true, had a bridge over this latter river at Rüsselsheim,⁷ but their only means of crossing the Rhine seems to have been by boats some way down at Winkel,⁸ so that, to concentrate across either river, they had to move on a larger arc than the garrisons. In 1797 Kléber, who had much experience in and outside Mayence, and who was anything but a timid General, told Moreau that the blockade of Ehrenbreitstein and Mayence would always absorb at least 40,000 men: 'I say that

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 185 note.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 45 note.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 132.

⁴ Jourdan, 82-3.

⁵ Archduke Charles, ii. 132-8.

⁶ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 265-9.

⁷ Jourdan, 83; Vogel, xviii.

⁸ Not far above Bingen; Jourdan, 83; Vogel, xvii.

as long as you do not occupy yourself seriously with the conquest of the four places on the Rhine, namely Ehrenbreitstein, Mayence, Mannheim, and Philippsburg, all that you do in Germany will resemble nothing but an incursion of Tartars.’¹ The Archduke for his part says that Jourdan left *only* 26,000 men to blockade Mayence and Ehrenbreitstein, very distant from one another, and he considered that the French had not weakened themselves by this detachment more in proportion than he had weakened himself by his.² In Italy Bonaparte, ‘the most audacious of Generals of our epoch’, did not dare, says Saint-Cyr (I think disapprovingly), to leave at any distance the single fortress of Mantua, before it was in his power;³ and Mantua, when it surrendered, had only 13,000 combatants.⁴ We may therefore say that Jourdan was not over-cautious when he regretfully made so large a detachment.

Meanwhile the Armée du Nord farther down the Rhine had nothing to do but to watch over the results of the ‘Révolution Batave’, but the only reinforcements Jourdan could get from it were two regiments of Dutch troops,⁵ whose fidelity was doubtful. After the first crossing, Beurnonville, the commander of the ‘Nord’, had agreed to stretch his line as far up-stream as Düsseldorf, ‘but I will not put a man inside it’. Later on, ten battalions and eight squadrons were sent there.⁶

The Archduke has criticized many of his own actions in this campaign, sometimes, as Saint-Cyr says,⁷ with unnecessary severity, but he does not seem to have realized how much he abandoned by his withdrawal from the Rhine valley, and from his position between the two French armies. His plan, in his own words, was ‘to dispute the ground foot by foot, without receiving battle, to profit by the first occasion to unite his troops, hitherto divided, and to throw himself with superior, or with at least equal forces on one or other of the two armies of the enemy’.⁸ But in withdrawing entirely from his central position between Jourdan and Moreau, and in making for the Danube, he gave the two armies full liberty to unite, and he

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 263.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 177-8.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 45 note.

⁴ Wouters, 138.

⁵ Jourdan, 35 note.

⁶ Grouchy, *Le Marquis de, Mémoires du Maréchal*, 5 vols., Paris, Dentu, 873-4, 8vo, 237-9; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 169-70.

⁷ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii.

⁸ Archduke Charles, ii. 178.

could not have foreseen that they would refuse this gift, unless indeed the treachery of Pichegru had put him in possession of the remarkable instructions under which his opponents were to act.¹ I make this suggestion with some timidity, as it seems novel, but we know that at first Moreau had acted under the tutelage of his predecessor and friend, Pichegru: it is inconceivable that the latter should not have communicated his instructions, and the Archduke would not mention any treachery, for, even when he wrote, there were many persons, whose names have never been published, that might have been injured by his revelations.² For the success of his plan it was necessary that the French should make a mistake, and on this, as Saint-Cyr says,³ he had no right to count, after the experience of 1795. Why did he count on it?

Once both French armies were across the Rhine, the natural course would have been for them to unite. Master of the passage of the Neckar,⁴ the Archduke could, says Saint-Cyr, both have prevented the junction of the two armies, and have made it impossible for the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to have advanced, as he feared it might, in order to anticipate him on the Danube.⁵ Had he concentrated up-stream against the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', it would have been most dangerous for Jourdan to have followed him, lending a flank to the garrisons of Mayence and of Mannheim, and leaving them in the rear. When the Archduke did withdraw from the Rhine valley, not only did he strip himself of the 30,000 men of the garrisons, some of whom could surely have been used if he had hung between the two armies, but he also lost completely the troops of the Circles, the Saxons, &c., some 10,000 men,⁶ who, when he retreated, abandoned the Austrian cause and made their own terms with the French. This is one of the many reasons for believing that the talents of the Prince have been much exaggerated. Wellington, who estimated him to be the greatest captain of the time,⁷ did not, I suspect, know all the details of the campaign. Given a central position between two armies which, as I believe, he knew to have orders to keep apart, while he himself had a free hand,

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 13.

² Wickham, i. 7.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 184.

⁴ The Neckar joins the Rhine at Mannheim.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 105-7.

⁶ Archduke Charles, ii. 214-15.

⁷ Croker, i. 338.

surely it ought not to have required great skill to crush each in turn.

Meanwhile the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' under Moreau on the 15th July had occupied Pforzheim. Jourdan should now have moved south-east to join Moreau, always acting on the inner flank of Wartensleben, in order to keep him from the Archduke and from the Danube valley. The plans for the campaign were, however, in the hands of Carnot, and the one idea of the 'organizer of victory' was still to operate on the wings of the enemy. This plan had succeeded in Holland in 1794 when carried out against an enemy formed of the armies of three nations, with different bases, and whose Commander-in-Chief had little real control over the troops of his allies. Success had strengthened Carnot's faith in his system, which he now tried against an enemy whose commander had full power over all his troops, and who could consequently concentrate on either flank without a shriek of horror from whichever nation found its base exposed.

The Directory therefore determined that, while the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' advanced, threatening the left of the Archduke, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', always acting on the right of Wartensleben, was to drive that commander back into Bohemia. Then only was Jourdan to march to Ratisbon,¹ and the two French armies might unite, and join hands by the Tyrol with Bonaparte in Italy.² It would be easy to transcribe pages of sagacious criticisms on this plan, but few students require much light to see the folly of a plan which sent two armies in pursuit of a vigilant antagonist, while ordering them to sweep the Tyrol with one wing and Bohemia with the other. That the two Austrian armies should at any time unite and throw their whole weight on either Jourdan or Moreau did not enter into the ideas of Carnot. The Allies had not so acted in 1794, and apparently he believed that the Austrian mass, hustled on each flank, would retreat in confusion, without dreaming of a return blow. Now the Archduke had seen the result of Coburg's strategy in 1794.

The eastward march of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' we can follow quickly, always remembering that Jourdan had a total strength

¹ Or Regensburg, Vogel, xxiv.

² For the instructions of the Directory see Jourdan, 265-75; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 385-9, 401-4, 409-10, 422-3.

of 46,197,¹ while the Austrians had 36,284 men,² a force which Jourdan makes 45,000, remarking that his adversary's great superiority in cavalry compensated him for his inferiority in total strength. Wartensleben had taken advantage of the Frankfurt armistice to slip away south-east for Würzburg, but Jourdan's movements were limited by his orders to operate on the enemy's northern flank, and by the fact that he had no bridge equipage and therefore had to avoid frequent crossings of the Main by keeping north of it and marching by Gemünden and Schweinfurt.³ Leaving Hanau on the 18th July, Jourdan crossed the Kinzig.⁴ On the 20th Colonel Mortier, leading the advanced parties of the left wing, occupied Gemünden, and on the 22nd Schweinfurt. Here the army swung round along the loop of the Main, facing east, with its right at Würzburg. Moreau sent word that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' would probably enter the valley of the Danube from Gmünd, nearly due south of Würzburg, on the 1st August,⁵ so that the heads of the two armies would soon be in line, although some sixty-three miles apart.⁶

Ney, in capturing Würzburg, had shown how he could deceive the enemy as to his strength. Ernouf, Chief of the Staff to Jourdan, wrote on the 25th July 1796 to Clarke (the future Minister of War to Napoleon, then employed in the War Office at Paris) telling him of this conquest, which he described as of the most extreme importance. Adjutant-General Ney, he said, arrived before the place with only 100 men: he found it held by 2,000 infantry and 300 horse, but he manœuvred so well that he seemed to multiply his troops. The garrison, consisting of troops of the Archbishop of Würzburg, were so intimidated that, when 'partisan Ney', acting on his usual plan, advanced to demand an immediate surrender, they proposed a capitulation, and, on the arrival of Championnet's division, surrendered at once. The place contained much ammunition, from which

¹ Jourdan, 86.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 96-7; if the Prince means that no further troops were given to Wartensleben. Jomini, *Rév.* viii. 262, gives him 38,000 infantry and artillery. *Vict. et Conq.* gives him 42,000.

³ Jourdan, 86-7, 111.

⁴ This Kinzig runs into the Main at Hanau, while the Kinzig in Moreau's theatre joins the Rhine at Kehl. Jourdan, 260; Vogel, xviii, xxiii.

⁵ Jourdan, 93.

⁶ On the 27th July Desaix was at Gmünd, Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 116, 381.

the army supplied itself: indeed it could hardly have gone on without capturing such stores, as well as many guns. One article in the capitulation must have made 'partisan Ney' chuckle; ecclesiastics imprisoned in the town for disciplinary purposes were not to be released.¹

The question now was to find Wartensleben, who had slipped away from Würzburg. Here let me say that much of the criticism of the Archduke on the slowness and uncertainty of some of the movements of Jourdan, and on the want of information shown by him, is misplaced.² The French were moving through a country as unknown to them as it was familiar to the Austrians. Moreau described himself as groping his way through a difficult country without maps: he would have been glad to get them from Jourdan,³ who doubtless was as badly off.⁴ When the rapid marches of Napoleon through Germany are quoted, it must be remembered that many of the officers who executed them, and whose information was at the service of the Emperor, had learnt their lesson in the hard schools of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. In 1805 four out of the seven corps of the Grande Armée were led by Bernadotte, Davout, Ney, and Soult, all of whom were also engaged in the 1806 campaign, while Mortier was with the Guard. Augereau, another head of a corps in 1805, had had his own campaign in 1800-1. We shall find Mortier in 1813 making use of roads he remembered from this campaign. It is true that Jourdan now delayed for some time, but this was to allow Moreau to get abreast of him; and, when he received news on the 27th July that Moreau was near Gmünd, he at once prepared to advance. Finally, with all respect for the Austrian commanders, some of their movements were so extraordinary that the Generals following in pursuit may be excused for a good deal of astonishment and perplexity: indeed, we shall find even Bonaparte, who generally knew his Austrian like a book, keeping his horses and carriage at his door for twenty-four hours, unable to divine the real intent of the wandering columns of his enemy.

The Archduke has also criticized⁵ both the manner and the

¹ Ney, i. 140 note; Jourdan, 88; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 284.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 231-2, &c.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 389.

⁴ Jourdan, 101, 110, 146; *Pajol*, i. 336.

⁵ Archduke Charles, ii. 205, 233-4.

rate of Jourdan's march, alleging that he spread his divisions, and that he waited too long to reconnoitre before making each advance. Jourdan replies that his army, having no means of transport, was forced to live on the country as it advanced, and thus the divisions had to be spread out as much as possible. As for the rate of marching, he replies that in reality he moved, not too slowly, but too quickly ; and here I believe he was right.¹ His danger afterwards, when on the Naab, or for the matter of that at Amberg, was that he had got too far in front of the dawdling Moreau, so that practically the Archduke, when marching on him, had not to move across the front of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' within striking distance. Then, as for reconnaissances, as I have just pointed out, the country was unknown to the French, and the people were hostile to them, so that the army got no information and but very misleading news from the inhabitants, while the Austrians learnt the exact movements of the French.

Jourdan's manner of directing his staff had the solemn approval of the Prussian staff-officers. Colonel Lecoq wrote to his King from Plauen on the 15th August 1796, 'General Jourdan arrived at 6 p.m. at Erlangen,² where he placed his headquarters. Shutting himself up with some of his aides-de-camp, the Government Commissioner (Gaubert), the Intendant of Provisions, several officers, and heads of departments, he at once drew up the orders for the operations of the following morning, and all the correspondence, including the answer to my request. At nine o'clock all the business was finished, and the orderly officers were on their way to the different divisions. Each General of Division receives information on the general aim of the movements, and in particular on what concerns his division. It is for him afterwards to regulate the details of the work assigned to him. I could only admire the order which reigns on this point.' Thus the old private won the praise of an officer belonging to what was then considered the best army in the world, and all this without the presence of those mischief-makers, the Representatives. Then, after saying that Jourdan and all his officers declared aloud their wish for peace in a manner which made the suspicious Prussian think there was

¹ Jourdan, 108-14.

² Jourdan was at Erlangen on the 9th August 1796.

some arranged plan to speak like this, Lecoq goes on, 'I have, Sire, found Jourdan's army in a very good state, if one excepts the garments of all colours which cover the infantry.¹ . . . The cavalry has fine men and good enough horses; the grenadiers are of fine stature, the infantry small but composed of vigorous young men, fit for fatigue. The teams of the artillery are excellent. This army, almost without equipages, is capable of the most rapid movement: whilst the Austrians take up positions to cover the retreat of their equipages, the French never cease harassing them.'²

One pleasant thing about these campaigns was that the French had outgrown the silly Republican mania for considering any opposition to them by 'the slaves of despots' as criminal, and they no longer despised the customs and courtesies of civilized warfare. Jourdan was anxious to outflank the right of Wartensleben and wished to secure the little fortress of Königshofen.³ Kléber, surely in a careless mood, detached from Lefebvre's division only 200 cavalry and a company of carabiniers, under Soult, to summon the place. The commander of the fortress was horrified. War is a solemn art, its rules have to be observed, and he pointed out civilly but firmly that the force was too small for him to capitulate to. Kléber, who had served in the Austrian army, considered this quite reasonable, and accordingly sent Lefebvre himself with four battalions, four squadrons, four howitzers, and two guns. The commandant was now satisfied and surrendered at once, thus giving the French a most useful position.⁴

Wartensleben was found only too easily, for on the 28th July, when Jourdan and Lefebvre with a reconnoitring party moved up the right bank from Schweinfurt by Forst towards Hassfurt, they met the enemy in such force and in such enterprising humour that both Generals were nearly captured.⁵ It is to be hoped that Mortier was not in command of the escort, but this is an incident which a Commander-in-Chief would remember, and it is curious that, after doing good service in this campaign,

¹ Cf. Bricard, 208, 246.

² Bailleu, 81-2; and a slightly different re-translation from the German in Goltz (French translation), 320-1.

³ North-east of Schweinfurt, Vogel, xviii.

⁴ *Pajol*, i. 341-2; Soult, i. 306-7.

⁵ *Pajol*, i. 340; Jourdan, 93; Vogel, xviii.

Mortier got no reward. Wartensleben, who had been at Würzburg, intent on attacking the sprawling columns of Jourdan, on the approach of Bernadotte had taken the extraordinary course of marching northwards, contrary to the Archduke's orders, thus placing himself on Jourdan's left and leaving the French between himself and the Archduke. He was now at Zeil, on the right bank of the Main, about half-way between Schweinfurt and Bamberg. This movement annoyed the Archduke, who had wished Würzburg to be defended, and who saw his plan of concentrating against one or other French army endangered by its loss. Hitherto he had kept Wartensleben ignorant of his great plan, but now he informed him that he meant to join him: meantime Wartensleben was to retire southward for the Danube, detaching a small corps to cover Bohemia.¹

The conduct of Jourdan at this moment is sharply criticized by the Archduke, who did not know that he was not a free agent, and who complains that he took no thought for the junction of the French armies and for the separation of the Austrians. Wartensleben, says the Prince, would have been much embarrassed had Jourdan, throwing his right forward, threatened to cut him off from the Danube and to throw him back on the Eger road.² Now, when Wartensleben found the right wing (Bernadotte) coming on him, his embarrassment took the form of sending him north, away from the Danube, as we have just seen. Jourdan, however, had received fresh instructions, based on the original idea for the campaign. He was to seize as soon as possible the line of communication by Aschaffenburg up to Nürnberg. If the enemy remained between the Main and the Neckar, their fate would be in the hands of Jourdan, who was to send only a *corps d'observation* to contain them, while he himself cut the Nürnberg road. If the enemy retired on Nürnberg he was to pursue with ardour with his centre and right, whilst his left seized Schweinfurt and took post on the Upper Main near Lichtenfels.³ Nothing would then remain but to press the enemy back into Bohemia. All this would protect his left flank and rear, the points about which the Directory were

¹ Archduke Charles, ii. 200-9, 221-35; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 282-5.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 206-7.

³ On the Main, north of Bamberg, south of Coburg, Vogel, xviii.

anxious. The truth was that it was a question of money, for above all things the Directory feared a dash of Wartensleben into Darmstadt and Franconia, by which they would have lost the contributions to be drawn from the conquered provinces: consequently it was Wartensleben's right, not his left, that Jourdan was to turn.¹

Dangerous as was this plan of acting on the outer flanks of the enemy, it must be remembered that, as far as Jourdan was concerned, the last move of Wartensleben northwards to Zeil seemed to show that he had no intention of joining or being joined by the Archduke, just as the Prince's retreat from his position at Pforzheim between the two French armies had seemed to show the abandonment of any idea of joint action with Wartensleben. And, after Moreau's triumphal progress, Jourdan might fairly hope that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' would keep the Archduke clear of him, especially as Zeil was so far north of the Prince (now at Böhmenkirch,² some hundred miles to the south-west), that, as long as Moreau kept in touch with his opponent, no danger of a stroke from the south existed. The ignorance of Wartensleben as to the Prince's plan, if it led to action on his part detrimental to the idea, still helped to deceive the French in his front better than more skilful operations would have done. Thus, had Jourdan now marched south to join Moreau, he would have acted in direct and unnecessary disobedience to his orders. The intention of the Directory is clear; for instance, they wrote to Bonaparte on the 25th July, 'Generals Moreau and Jourdan press him (the Archduke) sharply on both his flanks'.³

It seems to me that the critics have always under-estimated the danger to which Jourdan would have exposed himself if he had advanced to the Danube without any certainty of an immediate junction with Moreau. If the Archduke knew his Moreau, and acted on his knowledge, so probably did Jourdan; and, although he could not have expected the extraordinary abandonment he soon experienced, he was surely right in waiting until Moreau showed his wish for a junction by drawing

¹ Jourdan, 118-19, 272-4.

² Between Göppingen and Heidenheim, Vogel, xxiii.

³ Napoléon Bonaparte, *Correspondance inédite officielle et confidentielle, Italie*, i. 358 (Paris, Panckoucke, 1819).

near, as Jourdan urged him to do.¹ He himself points out that, had he marched for Neumarkt, the Archduke could still have joined Wartensleben in front of him.² I acknowledge, however, that he does not consider how much easier his retreat would have been than when, as actually happened, he was taken in flank. I do not stop to judge what would have happened if the Archduke, as he well might,³ had brought with him a still larger force than he did, as Jourdan believed the body marching against him was only 20,000. Still, critics might consider this point, for its possibility was a further reason for caution in approaching the Danube.

One charge of the Archduke's is easily refuted. He asserts that Jourdan's motive for keeping away from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was that, if he had approached it, he would have been subordinated to another General; and the Prince proceeds to moralize on human motives in the loftiest strain.⁴ Nothing can be more unfounded, and the Archduke must have forgotten the relative positions of the two commanders at this moment. Jourdan had won Wattignies and Fleurus, two pitched battles giving important results, while Moreau had done nothing but besiege fortresses in the north as General of Division. The Archduke assumes that Moreau, having the largest army, would have been selected to command. Now Moreau had a total of 79,529, and Jourdan 77,792,⁵ so that practically they were of equal strength. It is true that Jourdan had left a much larger detachment on the Rhine than had Moreau, but this was a temporary arrangement only, which might be altered at any moment if the Government chose to send up troops of the 'Nord' to relieve Marceau on the Rhine. Saint-Cyr, a General of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', be it remembered, is undoubtedly right when he assumes that, if the armies had been united, Jourdan would have commanded the active force, Moreau being left for the sieges.⁶ If either General was affected by fear of supersession, it must have been Moreau: indeed, Jourdan was the least

¹ Jourdan, 314-15; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 414-15.

² Jourdan, 117 note.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 189.

⁴ Archduke Charles, ii. 264-5.

⁵ Jourdan, 17; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. Table 105, but the numbers are very variable. Jourdan makes his own army 77,792, and Moreau, 77,996.

⁶ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 55 note.

self-seeking of men, but I believe that Moreau in this campaign, as in that of 1799, when he ruined Macdonald as he now did Jourdan, was really influenced by sheer military selfishness alone.

Jourdan now prepared to attack Wartensleben, whom he believed to be at Hassfurt. He decided to throw forward his right with the object of seizing Bamberg, cutting off the enemy from Nürnberg, and driving him back into Bohemia.¹ While preparing for this stroke, he fell ill with violent colic and handed over the command temporarily to Kléber. The plan was carried out by his lieutenant, and the Archduke, believing it was originated by Kléber and not knowing that he was praising Jourdan, describes it as excellent.² Still, the stroke was a failure, for Wartensleben retired eastward to Bamberg, whence, leaving the Main, he moved southward up the Regnitz for Nürnberg. This was the first sign that he wished to approach the Archduke. The 'Sambre-et-Meuse' followed, having severe engagements to which I shall refer later. Jourdan retook command on the 7th August.

The short temporary command of Kléber has some importance, as both the Archduke and Saint-Cyr attribute to him intentions different from those of Jourdan, and believe that he meant to gain the Danube valley, disregarding Wartensleben, or leaving a corps to observe him if he moved northwards or on Bohemia.³ The Archduke considers that the object of the attacks on Bamberg on the 4th August 1796 was to turn Wartensleben's left, and to cut him off from the road up the Regnitz to Nürnberg and the Danube valley. Neither of these great critics, whose opinions must always be treated with the respect due to their performances in the field, possessed Kléber's correspondence,⁴ which contains no indication that his views were different from those of Jourdan. Telling the Directory on the 3rd August that he had carried out Jourdan's plan for the attack on Zeil, he went on, 'I shall take care to send strong parties on Coburg and Forchheim to threaten both flanks of the enemy at the same time. All these arrangements, in conformity with the notes which the Commander-in-Chief has sent me, should lead

¹ Jourdan, 93-4, 275-8; Vogel, xviii, xxiii.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 250.

³ Archduke Charles, ii. 249-51; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 173.

⁴ Pajol, *Kléber*, 225-37.

us to happy results. Besides, I expect the General in a few days.' This does not look as if he attached any special importance to turning the enemy's left flank; and, in his dispatches reporting the withdrawal of the enemy up the Regnitz, he speaks as if it were natural that almost all the fighting should have fallen to Lefebvre on Wartensleben's right flank, and that Colaud should have come up to Bamberg, while the divisions on the west of the Regnitz had only to reach that river and clear their way to its right bank. Surely, if he had intended them to cross and to cut the Nürnberg road on the right bank, he would have expressed some regret for the failure, or have given some explanation of it. I presume that he had no means of throwing a bridge over the river.

Kléber was far too headstrong a leader and too bitter a critic to carry out, far less to praise, movements of which he did not approve. Again, in the fight at Forchheim on the 7th August no special effort was made to turn the enemy's left; and, although the result was to drive Kray over to the right bank of the Regnitz, Kléber reports the retreat of the enemy on, as he thought, Nürnberg, as if that were a necessary and sufficient result.¹ Had he wished to turn Wartensleben from the Danube route, surely he would have contented himself with holding the enemy on the right bank of the Regnitz, and have swept round their forces on the left bank. The Archduke himself points out that Kléber by a direct march might have brought almost the whole of his force on the Aisch by the 5th August, and next day would have been on the flank of an enemy too weak to resist him.² Instead, he waited to wheel his army round on its right until it faced south, parallel to the front of the enemy. The Archduke suggests that he may have considered himself bound by Jourdan's intentions, but the change of direction of the enemy southward up the Regnitz had not been foreseen and, had he believed he was to be responsible for a wrong movement, his peculiar health would have failed at once, and all the more so because he really was ill at this time and left the fighting line for a few days as soon as Jourdan returned; in doing so, he expressed satisfaction with the position of the army.³

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 233-6.

² Archduke Charles, ii. 254-5; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 289.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 236.

It is true that in Kléber's letter of the 7th August, handing the command back to Jourdan, he describes the army as 'concentrated on a line well supported and covered by rivers, and at last ready to move straight on the Danube, towards which it faces', but the context, I think, makes it plain that he intended to reach the Danube by driving the enemy before him, or by passing over them. Apparently he expected to find Wartensleben next day still before him on both sides of the Regnitz, for he says that next day he would have reconnaissances made in every direction to know in what fresh positions the enemy might have established themselves, 'especially towards Herzogenrauch, that is, behind the Aurach river. Lefebvre has orders to send a party on Grafenberg to alarm the enemy's rear'. Now Herzogenrauch is nearly due west, and Grafenberg due east, of Erlangen on the Regnitz, and obviously it was on a line between those two points that he expected to find the enemy, that is, on a front parallel to that from which he had just driven them. This seems proof that he would have followed the enemy had they continued to retire southwards for the Danube valley, but it does not give the least reason for assuming that he would have marched southward up the Regnitz if he found that he was leaving Wartensleben on his flank, or practically in his rear.

A letter of Kléber's of the 28th October 1796 to Moreau might be taken as implying that his intention was different from that of Jourdan. 'Some more days of interim' (command) 'and I would have given you proofs of the desire I had to approach you; all my efforts then tended to that, the whole army knows it, but destiny had ordered otherwise.'¹ Now when he wrote this he was in full and permanent feud with Jourdan, and his animosity must have coloured his remembrance of his intentions, for his statement is not in accordance with his letters at the moment, nor with his actions, as I have just shown. Of course Kléber wished to join Moreau: so did Jourdan, and the question of the junction was only one of time and place. If Wartensleben could have been maimed or have been bottled up in Bohemia (not an easy task for the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' if the comparative strengths of the armies be considered), then matters would have been different.

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 250.

Comte Pajol, to whose works I am so much indebted, attributes to Kléber the intention, after the occupation of Bamberg, of pushing the enemy into Bohemia, and then, guarding the *débouchés* by a corps of observation, of marching on the Danube with the rest of the army. Jourdan no doubt would have been happy to do this, and in fact we shall find him getting almost to the first point of the programme when he was interrupted by the stroke of the Archduke. The Comte, however, goes on, 'If he' (Kléber) 'had continued to direct the movements, the false position of Wartensleben, occupying the two banks of the Regnitz, would not have escaped him'.¹ Surely M. le Comte here forgets that he has just described the attacks on the enemy on both sides of the Regnitz,² without any special advantage being taken of their position, whilst, when Jourdan retook command, Wartensleben had all his troops on the right bank. I therefore consider I can claim Kléber as agreeing with the opinion of Jourdan that, unless Moreau were in touch, the army could not march for the Danube, leaving Wartensleben on its flank or rear and with the risk of meeting the Archduke. I will go further and, braving all critics, will say that I do not believe any General would have marched for the Danube under such conditions. If Jourdan committed a sin in not marching south, it was a mortal one; but that most capable critic, Soult, does not include it in his list of errors.³

Jourdan's pursuit of the Austrians, if it had not been swift enough to please the Archduke, still had led to much severe fighting, especially in the valley of the Regnitz, where the advanced parties, led by Ney and Mortier, had distinguished themselves. On the 8th August, when Colaud's division came up the right bank of the Regnitz by Hirschaid to attack the Austrians holding Forchheim,⁴ Adjutant-General Ney led this column with the light troops and the cavalry. Although the enemy had fourteen guns to his two, he drove them from their first position, and held fast till Colaud could bring up his division. After some hard fighting, Wartensleben, menaced by the rest of the army, at last retired. Ney, 'whose presence of mind

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 237.

² Lefebvre and Colaud fought on the right bank; Grenier, Championnet, and Bernadotte, with Bonnaud's cavalry, on the left bank. *Pajol*, i. 347-50; *Pajol, Kléber*, 231-5; *Vogel*, xxiii, xxiv.

³ Soult, i. 322.

⁴ *Vogel*, xxiii.

and bravery had much contributed to the success of this day, by containing the Austrian centre with very few men', did not lose a moment, but flew on Forchheim, a fortress capable of long defence, and bullied the commandant into instant surrender, almost in sight of Wartensleben. Here again the French found some very necessary ammunition and seventy guns.¹

Kléber was delighted at this last vigorous stroke in which Ney had had two horses shot under him, and had distinguished himself on a day which had been a hard one for Colaud's division. Being at the time in temporary command of the army, Kléber named Ney General of Brigade on the spot. 'I won't compliment you on your modesty' (Ney had already refused that rank), 'for, pushed beyond a certain point, it ceases to be a good quality. Anyhow, you may take it as you like, I have made up my mind. You are General of Brigade.' The men applauded, but Ney remained silent and depressed. 'Well,' said Kléber, 'you are very miserable and much upset, but there are the Austrians awaiting you. Go and make them compensate for your annoyance. As for me, I shall report your promotion to the Directory.' He did so: 'Adjutant-General Ney during this and the preceding campaigns has multiplied proofs of talent, zeal, and intrepidity, but he surpassed himself yesterday, when he had two horses killed under him' (the history of his stud would be worth writing). 'I have considered myself empowered to raise him on the field to the rank of General of Brigade, the brevet for which had already been sent to him eighteen months ago. His modesty did not then permit him to accept it. In confirming this nomination, Citizen Directors, you will give a striking proof of your justice.'² Jourdan was equally complimentary in forwarding the brevet when it arrived: 'The Government has acquitted itself of the debt of gratitude which it owed to one of its worthiest and most zealous servants, and it has done only justice to the talents and valour of which you give fresh proof every day. Receive my sincere congratulations. Salut et Fraternité.'³

The Directory also was pleased with Ney. Referring to fights

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 290-1; Pajol, *Kléber*, 233-6; Pajol, i. 349-50; Jourdan, 96-7; Ney, i. 145-7; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 319-20; Archduke Charles, ii. 255-7; Vogel, xx.

² Ney, i. 148; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 291; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 320.

³ Jourdan, 156-7, 15th August 1796.

which had occurred at Zeil and Ebelsbach on the 3rd August, when Kléber's wing had been moving on Bamberg,¹ the President, Larévellière-Lépeaux, wrote on the 14th August to Ney, 'You have shown . . . all that the impetuosity of French valour can do. These actions do equal credit to your courage and your prudence. Both being already known, the Directory has very great satisfaction in giving you the assurance of the esteem with which your zeal and military talents continue to inspire them.'² This letter shows that the Directory must have promoted Ney before the receipt of Kléber's report of Forchheim, written on the 7th August: indeed Gavard gives the date of promotion as the 1st August.³ It is to be noticed that Ney's prudence is mentioned, and this was only doing justice to him, for he was no foolhardy adventurer, and his bold strokes were not lightly undertaken. 'Homme brave et très estimé du soldat,' is the opinion of the gunner, Bricard.⁴ Here let me give an incident in an earlier part of the campaign, which shows what varied troops he had to face. Dashing into a column of the enemy, he heard a strange language, and saw some of the men throw down their arms. They were Turks, taken prisoners by the Austrians in a frontier war, and forced to serve.⁵

Another Adjutant-General, Mortier, who led the advanced guard of Lefebvre's division, had his share of praise. On the 6th August, after the occupation of Bamberg, when the army began moving up the Regnitz, Lefebvre's cavalry, under Richepanse, had a severe fight near Hirschaid, in which Richepanse, 'after having given everywhere an example of the greatest intrepidity', received a sabre cut on his arm, which forced him to leave the field. Montbrun, then *sous-lieutenant* in the Chasseurs, was A.D.C. to Richepanse. 'This brave young man,' reported Kléber, 'seeing his General assailed on all sides and unable on account of his wound to defend himself, covers him with his body, parries the strokes delivered at him, and thus gives him time to withdraw.' Kléber promoted him Lieutenant on the ground, and begged the Directory to confirm this, which they did on the 16th August. Kléber went on in his report, 'Adjutant-General Mortier, who replaced General Richepanse, gave this day in the midst of the struggle proof of great sang-

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 228; Bricard, 215; Vogel, xviii.

³ Gavard, 13.

⁴ Bricard, 217.

² Ney, i. 357.

⁵ Ney, i. 139.

froid. With such leaders a General need not count the number of his enemies.' Next day, while Ney, leading Colaud's division, was attacking Forchheim, Mortier, leading Lefebvre's division on the same bank of the Regnitz but moving farther to the east, assaulted Ebermannstadt on the Wiesent with a battalion, four squadrons, and two guns. So sharp was the attack that, though the enemy had 1,200 infantry, 600 horse, and several guns, they abandoned the place after an hour's fight, so that Lefebvre, holding both banks of the Wiesent, was able to send patrols on the rear of the enemy engaged by Colaud and the other divisions near the Regnitz.¹

Instead of continuing his march on Nürnberg as the Archduke wished, Wartensleben now turned south-east for Amberg. The mass of the army followed him, and Ney was sent straight on southward for Nürnberg; then, relieved by Bernadotte's division, he rejoined Colaud.

Jourdan now took him, at the head of the light troops, to reconnoitre the country for the attack which he meant to make, but which was avoided by the enemy's retirement. Ney came on the fortress of Rothenberg.² It was difficult work to scale the height with his horsemen, but he got up to the place, and was about to summon it, when he saw a flock of sheep being taken in. Waiting till the bridge was filled with the flock, he launched his Adjutant with some Chasseurs, who got in and boldly demanded the surrender of the fort. The astonished commandant gave way and the army gained fifty guns and valuable supplies.³

The Archduke wished Wartensleben to hold Amberg, as Jourdan, once past Nürnberg, had no access to the Danube until he reached that town.⁴ After some severe fighting, however, Wartensleben was forced back and retired eastward over the Naab. On the 18th August Amberg was occupied by the French, and on the 21st the army lay along the Naab, from Schwandorf to Nabburg and Wernburg.⁵ To avoid danger

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 230-3; *Pajol*, i. 347-50; Jourdan, 95-6; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 287-90; *Vict. et Cong.*, vi. 316-19; Thoumas, i. 122-3; Archduke Charles, ii. 255-6; Vogel, xxiii-xxiv.

² North-east of Nürnberg.

³ Ney, i. 155-6; Jourdan, 100; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 291.

⁴ Archduke Charles, iii. 15-18.

⁵ Jourdan, 91-108; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 285-304; *Pajol*, i. 340-53; Pajol, *Kléber*, 225-37; Archduke Charles, ii. 248-65; Vogel, xviii, xxiii, xxiv.

from the Danube valley, Bernadotte was detached to Deining, south-west of the right of the army.¹ The night they arrived, 21st August, the men passed in admiring the endless line of the bivouac fires of the enemy, and in piling up their own in cheerful emulation.² Had they but known it, the long advance, which had led them on the path of glory from Charleroi to close on the frontiers of Bohemia, was ended and so also were the days of success and triumph. As for Jourdan, his juniors were to have fresh horizons opened to them in time, but his own prestige was soon to be lost, and was never to be recovered.

¹ South-east of Neumarkt.

² Bricard, 223.

XIV

THE STRATEGY OF ARCHDUKE CHARLES

(August 1796)

Battle of Neresheim. The Archduke evades Moreau. Turning-point of the campaign. Battle of the Lech.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

19th August. Alliance signed between France and Spain.

ALL this time, while Wartensleben had been retreating before the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had been following the Archduke. The situation in the middle of July, it will be remembered, was that Moreau, about to attack Pforzheim, had found that the Archduke had already left the place. The next movements are of no special interest for us. The Archduke retired eastwards on Nördlingen to receive his left wing under Frolich, and Moreau followed him slowly with the centre under Saint-Cyr and the left under Desaix, whilst the right under Ferino, joined by Delaborde from the left of the Rhine, made a wide sweep round southwards, so that its outer flank touched the lake of Constance. Finally, on the 10th August the Archduke, having been joined by his left wing, had his army between Nördlingen and the Danube. In front of him Moreau, who often scattered his command, and who was not yet joined by his right, had his troops stretched from Bopfingen¹ to Lindau on Lake Constance. Saint-Cyr had rather led the way for Desaix, and most of the fighting of the centre and left had been done by him. The army had, it will be seen, come through the mountains on to a district to be well known later; for example, on the 8th August the left of Saint-Cyr had occupied Ulm.² To the north-east the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', under Jourdan, was on the Regnitz, its right (Bernadotte), at Nürnberg.

Saint-Cyr disapproved of the whole direction of the army: he

¹ West of Nördlingen.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 93-143 and Atlas viii; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 234-44; *Vict. et Conq.*, 211-26, 270-9; Archduke Charles, ii. 266-8; Vogel, xxiii.

considered that Moreau should have tried at once to join Jourdan, for on the 14th July, when the Archduke left Pforzheim, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' occupied Würzburg to the north-west. Had both French armies then inclined to their inner flanks, their junction could have been made with ease. Saint-Cyr does not say whether he gave his opinion on this point at the time or whether, as is most probable, he preferred to chew the cud of this and other errors of Moreau for his private enjoyment,¹ but we have seen that the isolation of the two French armies was in accordance with the instructions of Carnot, and that Moreau was ordered to move on the Tyrol to prevent the Archduke from detaching troops to Italy.

The more immediate grievance of Saint-Cyr, and one on which he did speak his mind, was the conduct of the pursuit, if we may so style what had been little more than following the retreat of the enemy. He believed that the march through the hills was an opportunity for utilizing the superiority of the French soldier in mountain and hill warfare over the stiff and precise battalions of the Austrians, and he also believed that the Archduke could have been brought to battle before he had been joined by his right wing. Moreau had, says Saint-Cyr, thinking of himself, Generals accustomed to this sort of warfare; but the Commander-in-Chief had had a very different training. Coming from the 'Nord', Moreau had worked only on level ground and in a narrow theatre: indeed the 'cockpit of Europe' was the very opposite of the broken and varied country in which he was now operating.²

Also, according to Saint-Cyr, this was Moreau's first essay in wielding an army on the march; consequently, he was sometimes bold, even rash, when just before he had been timid to excess. Here Saint-Cyr does not actually mention what I think was also in his mind, the curious pauses which were one of the characteristics of Moreau and which often enough chafed his critic. Further, Saint-Cyr was not one of the regular council of the commander: that was formed of his Chief of the Staff, Reynier,³ who had come with him from the 'Nord', and Desaix.

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 108-11; Archduke Charles, ii. 181.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 117-18.

³ Général Comte Jean-Louis-Ebenezer Reynier (1771-1814). Taken prisoner at Leipzig in 1813, and died, exhausted, after being exchanged. *Fastes*, iii. 518-19.

Reynier vexed Saint-Cyr by the minute detail in which he gave out orders, specifying the place for each body and not giving the corps commanders any free hand.¹ Desaix, a splendid soldier, had now to wield a large body, and he took time to get accustomed to the work. Also, having won such a high reputation, he was nervous about retaining it and was anxious to avoid any check, a feeling no doubt increased by what had just occurred at Ettlingen. This, Saint-Cyr considered, made Desaix's great talents of less use than they should have been in this campaign. I have already said that Napoleon agreed with this part of the criticism, declaring that he himself had cured Desaix of 'fumbling'. Not that there was any ill feeling between the two wing commanders; for example, on the 18th July we find Desaix expressing his intense joy at the success of Saint-Cyr, and hoping that he would get them out of the trouble caused by the Ettlingen affair.²

While believing that all this criticism of Moreau is true enough, one must be fair to him by saying that he, like Jourdan, was working much in the dark compared with the commanders who in later campaigns worked in this district. He had never expected to operate so far from the Rhine, and the country was utterly unknown to him and to his staff: he had not even a passable map of the district, a want he complained of daily, and which he sought to remedy by applying to Jourdan, who was as badly off as he.³

On the 11th August was fought the battle of Neresheim,⁴ the brunt of which fell on Saint-Cyr. Both armies, French and Austrian, were scattered, but Moreau's right wing, whose presence would have given him a superiority in numbers over the Archduke, was still far in rear. His centre had been pushed forward beyond the Egge stream, and here Saint-Cyr had only Taponier's division, for Duhesme was some distance off, at Medlingen in the Danube valley: the left wing was not so far advanced as the centre. On the 10th Saint-Cyr, finding that the enemy in his front had been reinforced, carried out with Moreau's permission what he intended to be a slight affair, the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 117-19.

² Bonnal, *Desaix*, 103-4.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 119-20.

⁴ South-west of Nördlingen and north-east of Dillingen. Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*. Atlas; Vogel, xxiii; Jomini, Atlas xv.

driving of the enemy from Eglingen. Then, instead of being allowed to halt, as he wished, he was ordered on by Moreau. Soon he perceived columns of Austrians and informed Moreau that he expected to be attacked. Again he was ordered to advance, but a violent storm extinguished the portfires of the artillery on both sides and put an end to the fight. Saint-Cyr now tried to persuade Moreau to let him take up a strong defensive position behind the Egge, where he could receive the attack which he thought would be delivered next day. Moreau did not believe in any such impending attack: the next day would see an end of the business, when he would bring up the left to link with the centre. Meanwhile he would neither fall back nor allow Saint-Cyr to bring up Duhesme to join him: all he would do was to put a detachment from the reserve, 150 men of that fine regiment the Carabiniers, in front of Saint-Cyr's cavalry, in order to let the latter rest in quiet. None the less Saint-Cyr, confident in his own opinion, secured his line of retreat by guarding the bridge over the Egge at Dischingen by a regiment and some cavalry under Lecourbe.¹

He proved to be right; the Archduke, intending to draw off himself from before Moreau and to join Wartensleben in order to crush Jourdan, determined first to strike at the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', which he considered had got too near him to make his intended movement safe. But he intended only to repulse Moreau, not to follow him up if he beat him, for that would have taken up too much time and would have made him miss the junction with Wartensleben. He had some 43,000 against the 44,737 of Moreau, but the mass of his force was thrown on Saint-Cyr, who had only (with the reserve) 30,426. Bad roads delayed the attack, which began at daybreak on the 11th August. Saint-Cyr, who never, I think, liked crack corps, tells how the Carabiniers, unaccustomed to outpost duty, for they were heavy cavalry,² came back at full gallop when pressed, and rejoined the reserve. The action of so small a body ought to have had no importance, but Saint-Cyr's cavalry, which was under Nansouty, afterwards one of the great cavaliers of the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 135-9.

² Under the Empire they wore the cuirass and formed part of the Cuirassier divisions. See *Le Manuscrit des Carabiniers*, and Juzancourt, *Notice sur les Carabiniers*.

Empire,¹ were disheartened by seeing what they believed was the whole of the crack corps in flight, and gave way in their turn till rallied by Nansouty behind the heavy cavalry. Even then they were unsteady, so that Nansouty drew them back from the village of Eglingen, when the enemy's horse fell on the flank of Laroche's brigade posted there and so routed it that it was only rallied far to the rear at Heidenheim and appeared on the field no more that day.²

The battle was but begun, the Archduke had all the day before him, and, thanks to the incredulity of Moreau, he had surprised the army scattered and in a bad position. Saint-Cyr was in advance of Desaix, and now had but twelve battalions with him, for six had fled with Lambert, and another six were with Duhesme. Now Moreau arrived, not knowing what to decide on. Saint-Cyr suggested that he should call in Duhesme on the right, let the reserve under Bourcier join Taponier's division, and throw Desaix on the right flank of the enemy by Schweindorf on Forheim; one division of the left (Delmas) to be directed on the rear of the Austrians. Moreau, however, though he approved of the plan, would not settle anything till he had seen Desaix and, having placed the reserve on the left of Saint-Cyr between Frikinge and Weinacht-Hof without giving it any orders, he set off for Desaix.

Saint-Cyr now placed nine of his battalions right and left of Dunstelkingen, Lecourbe with three battalions being on his right rear, guarding the bridge at Dischingen. Fortunately the Archduke had not pressed his advantage at once, and, when at 9 a.m. he again attacked, he was beaten off. The Austrian artillery had burnt the village of Dunstelkingen, so that the ruins now blocked that road to them. Back again came Moreau: he announced that Desaix would make the attack on the enemy's right, but was waiting until he could call in Delmas from his left and so have all his troops in hand. The Archduke had sent a column against the extreme left of Desaix at Bopfingen, and the left wing was attacked also at Schweindorf and Kossingen, but the Austrians scattered their troops, and Desaix had no difficulty

¹ Général Comte Étienne-Antoine-Marie Champion de Nansouty (1768-1815), Premier Écuyer to the Emperor, Colonel-Général des Dragons, commanded cavalry of the Guard 1813 and 1814, till after Craonne. *Fastes*, iii. 452-3; Thoumas, ii. 1-58.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 144-9.

in beating them off. The future General Gazan¹ held Schweindorf, and Desaix professed to be ready to advance.

Once more Moreau set off for Desaix, whilst the enemy in front of Saint-Cyr seemed to rest, and this not from the torpor which sometimes seized the Archduke, for on this occasion he could be seen riding along the front of his troops, accompanied by an English officer, whose red coat shone amongst the Austrian uniforms.² Saint-Cyr, who had had an anxious time, was now overwhelmed with fatigue and tried to snatch a few minutes' sleep in rear of his principal battery, which was firing slowly. Hardly had he closed his eyes than he was awakened by a Job's messenger, who told him that Duhesme on his right in the Danube valley had been almost surrounded and, losing heavily and leaving some of his guns, had been driven off the field. Duhesme retired away from Saint-Cyr, and did not rejoin him until three days later. To make matters worse, the artillery park of the centre with the ammunition column, which had been at Heidenheim, alarmed by the defeat of Duhesme, had retreated northwards to Aalen, so that no more ammunition could be obtained except from the small park of Bourcier's reserve.

Once more Moreau appeared, this time assuring Saint-Cyr that Desaix would soon attack with almost the whole of his troops: there was still ample time to crush the right of the Archduke while a large proportion of his army was still detached against Saint-Cyr's right in the Danube valley, but Saint-Cyr felt sure that, if Desaix had really intended to attack in force, he would not have delayed so long. Consequently he considered himself abandoned to his own resources, and indeed the situation was bad for him; half his force had been driven miles from the field, his right was completely turned, and he must soon suffer from want of ammunition. Every moment he expected to be attacked and to see the Austrian force which had routed Duhesme sweep round and envelop first Lecourbe and then Taponier. The Archduke, however, partly daunted by the appearance of the reserve, which he thought had joined Saint-

¹ Général Comte Honoré-Théodore-Maxime Gazan, created Comte de la Peyrière in 1808 (1765-1845). One of the Generals of division of Davout's 3rd Corps of the Grande Armée; Pair de France during the Cent Jours and in the July Monarchy. *Fastes*, iii. 238-40.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 157-8.

Cyr, did not attack again seriously, and about one o'clock the battle died away in a cannonade, the French grudging every shot they fired. They even regained some of the ground they had lost, for 800 or 900 men, collected from the remains of Lambert's brigade, reoccupied Heidenheim, and the enemy there retired on Dillingen.

Such was the battle of Neresheim, in which the commanders on either side had thrown away their opportunities. Had the Archduke contented himself with observing Duhesme in his useless position in the Danube valley, and had he concentrated against Saint-Cyr, pushing his attack steadily home without pause, he must have crushed the centre of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. On the other hand, if Moreau had taken advantage of the way in which the Archduke had weakened himself by sending a strong force (7,000 infantry and 2,400 horse, besides a small body under Mercantin¹) against Duhesme (who probably had only 5,000 infantry and 640 horse²), and had thrown his left and reserve on the Austrian right, he would have crushed it. He himself had passed the day shuttlecocking uselessly between Saint-Cyr and Desaix, uncertain what to do. Finally he arrived with Desaix at Saint-Cyr's head-quarters at Kasenstein, saying they had both determined that, by the time Delmas had been called in, it was too late for the attack on the right of the Archduke, which they put off till the next day. Saint-Cyr was to remain on his position until Desaix had gained ground in rear of the enemy, and had attacked their right flank.³

As regards Moreau's conduct of the battle, Saint-Cyr's account differs greatly from that of Jomini, which the Archduke follows.⁴ The latter says: 'If Moreau can be reproached with having extended himself too much, he is also to be praised for the calmness and firmness with which he maintained his centre, without disturbing himself about what happened to his flanks.' This is very different from Saint-Cyr's account of Moreau's useless flights from him to Desaix and back. It is quite true that, as Saint-Cyr says, Moreau was too good a General to let himself

¹ Ibid., 160; Archduke Charles, ii. 267.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 245.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 144-66 and Atlas xi; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 244-55 and Atlas xv; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 278-89; Archduke Charles, ii. 242-6, 266-80; Vogel, xxiii.

⁴ Archduke Charles, ii. 288.

be frightened into retreat by the disaster to Duhesme on his extreme right,¹ but that is not saying much when we remember that the whole of his left was untouched. As for not disturbing himself about his flankers, as Duhesme on the right, and Delmas on the left, were called, we have just seen that it was the extended position of Delmas and the natural dislike to attack without him that prevented Moreau from using Desaix and the left wing to any purpose on this day. Jomini himself speaks most strongly and sensibly on the uselessness and danger of employing such large bodies of flankers (from 5,000 to 6,000 men) as Duhesme and Delmas had, at such a distance from the main body,² and in this case we have a double exemplification of the evil which could be caused, for Duhesme shows the danger of the detachment's being crushed, and Delmas the delay caused before it could be called in. The exposure of Duhesme in the Danube valley is especially characteristic of Moreau and, if such an absurd plea could be allowed, his apologists might argue that Duhesme, serving as a decoy, had drawn off enough of the enemy to save the centre from being crushed, but the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was not strong enough to sacrifice six battalions for three days on such a chance.

The morning of the 12th August found the Archduke still on his ground, hoping that Moreau might accept the fight on the previous day as a defeat, but, as the French remained firm, he began to withdraw. Saint-Cyr, as arranged, did not press him, for fear of spoiling the attack to be made by the left wing, or, as he rather cynically puts it, to prevent any pretext for not making it. When he was about to advance, up came Moreau, saying that, considering all things, and especially the fear of wanting ammunition, he had agreed with Desaix not to make the attack planned on the previous night. Consequently the Archduke drew off undisturbed and, marching south-east to Donauwörth, crossed the Danube. All the 12th Moreau remained in the same position, not knowing in what direction to move, but at last he heard that the Archduke was passing the Danube, and resolved to follow him over. The park of the centre was brought up and also Duhesme's troops. Moreau was very angry with Duhesme, and removed him from his command of the division which had retired, but in a few days Saint-Cyr got

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 167.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 247 note.

this order revoked.¹ We shall find Duhesme going to Italy in 1798, where his new Chief of the Staff considered him with some awe as 'a General of the Armée du Rhin, which denoted order and method'.²

We now come to the turning-point of the campaign, when the fate of the two French armies for this year was decided. For some weeks after the battle of Neresheim, the movements of Moreau read like a bad dream. The Archduke had, as we know, determined long before this to throw himself on one or other of the two French armies with superior, or at least equal forces, and had chosen the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', the farther advanced, as his target. He had failed in his first plan of throwing Moreau far enough back to make his departure from in front of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' entirely free, and so far he was in a worse position than before the battle, for now, he thought, if he set out at once, Moreau would follow closely. Thoroughly understanding his man, he took the extraordinary step of withdrawing from before the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to the right bank of the Danube, knowing that he thus left the road to a junction with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' temptingly open, but still feeling sure that Moreau would not accept the gift, but would follow him, and so would be led away from Jourdan. Then the march against the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' would be all the safer. On the 13th August he crossed to the right bank of the Danube at Donauwörth.³

The passage of the Archduke to the right bank of the Danube is saluted by the critics with praise as a masterpiece of skill, and it was fully justified by success, for Moreau followed him across. But Saint-Cyr's eulogy reads to me as more intended to discredit Moreau than to advantage the Prince, as if he said, 'Clever man the Archduke, to know what a fool Moreau would make of himself'.⁴ I do not see that the Archduke was so certain that Moreau would follow him,⁵ and I think his immediate purpose was to get as much distance from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' as would enable him to begin the march against Jourdan. This was his last opportunity, for, had he waited longer, Jourdan might have

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 166-9, 176.

³ Archduke Charles, ii. 280-2; Vogel, xxiii.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 185 note 1.

⁵ Archduke Charles, iii. 1-2.

² Thiébault, ii. 294.

driven Wartensleben right into Bohemia, in which case the Archduke could only have fallen back on Enns or Budweis.¹

It was not until the 14th August that Moreau began to move southwards towards the Danube. The Archduke, therefore, finding that he was not being followed closely, and seeing that Jourdan, always advancing eastwards, had increased the gap between the two French armies, now determined to deal his stroke at the 'Sambre-et-Meuse',² which on the 17th August was in front of Sulzbach, a little to the west of Amberg, with Bernadotte at Neumarkt.³ On the same day the Archduke recrossed the Danube by Ingolstadt and Neuburg with a detachment of 28,000 men, part of which⁴ was sent to reinforce the body under Nauendorf, detached from Wartensleben, to observe Bernadotte. The Archduke left in front of Moreau on the right bank a retarding force under Latour of 30,288 men,⁵ besides the *émigré* corps of Condé, now only some 5,000 to 6,000 strong.⁶ We must follow for the present the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' and the Austrian force in its front.

On the 17th posts pushed out on the left bank of the river from Saint-Cyr's corps on Donauwörth reported that a reconnaissance had been made there by the 'Sambre-et-Meuse',⁷ doubtless by Bernadotte, who was on the right of that army. The bridges at Münster, Blindheim, Höchstädt, and other places, broken by the Archduke, were repaired, and detachments passed over on the 18th and ascertained that the Archduke, as we shall see, had recrossed to the left bank, and was again on the same side as Moreau.⁸ One would have thought that this would at least have halted Moreau, if it had not sent him down the left bank in hot pursuit, for it was evident that the Prince was about to strike Jourdan. Moreau, however, simply continued his movement for Augsburg; on the 19th the army crossed by the bridges above Donauwörth, and by the 20th the centre and left were on the lower Schutter river,⁹ Desaix dropping Delmas with six battalions, two cavalry regiments, and a horse artillery battery on the left bank. General Oudinot, pushed out by

¹ Hamley, 160.

² Archduke Charles, iii. 1.

³ Jourdan, 103-4; Vogel, xxiv.

⁴ Three battalions, six squadrons, Archduke Charles, iii. 3.

⁵ Ibid., iii. 1-20.

⁶ Bittard des Portes, 266-7.

⁷ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 176-7.

⁸ Ibid., 179, 183.

⁹ Running into the Danube at Donauwörth, Vogel, xxiii.

Delmas from this force, seems to have reached Nördlingen, Ingolstadt, and even as far down the left bank as Neuburg.¹ He had not yet received his usual wound, so probably he had not seen much fighting so far. In one of Saint-Cyr's reports there is a curious mixture of history and present wants: 'The French arrived at Höchstädt the day before yesterday (that is, on the 13th August), the same day on which was fought the famous battle of Höchstädt (Blenheim) ninety-two years ago. La division Taponier est sans pain depuis quatre jours.'²

On the 19th August, the day on which Moreau was crossing at Dillingen, the Archduke had reached Schamhaupten, only some twenty-two miles from Deining, where Bernadotte lay.

If I may venture to differ from the critics, it is not so much the fact that Moreau followed the Archduke over the river for which he should be blamed, but that he did not follow him closely. The Archduke, who ought to be the best judge of his own intentions, does not put his crossing as a mere trap: he only says that in doing so he had not renounced the plan of joining Wartensleben. The sojourn of Moreau on the field of battle of Neresheim, and the march of Jourdan in the Pegnitz valley, favoured the execution of his plans.³ Had Moreau pressed him as Bonaparte would have done, the most the Prince could have gained would have been in delaying Moreau for, say a day, by breaking the bridges behind him when he recrossed, and this only at the risk of finding Latour crushed the very day he left that General, and Moreau in hot pursuit of him himself. He would then never have taken the risk of going on, possibly to find Jourdan sufficiently withdrawn to cause the stroke to be delivered in the air, and the striker left between two French forces well able to deal with him. The decision to cross can hardly have been that of Moreau alone. Saint-Cyr regretted that he had not been consulted before it was arrived at,⁴ but Moreau seems to have taken the advice of Desaix always, and it is to be presumed that Moreau, Desaix, and the Chief of the Staff, Reynier, were responsible for the crossing, and Moreau for the delay on the field.

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 168-9, 175-80, 404-13; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix, 47-8; Nollet, 13.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 408.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 1.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 204 note 1.

There were two courses open to Moreau when he heard of the Archduke's abandonment of the left bank of the river. In the first place, he could have marched down the left bank, getting between Jourdan and the Archduke and so enabling the two French armies to unite, either against the Archduke, or against the force opposed to Jourdan. It is true that by his orders he was to skirt the Tyrol, and even to detach 15,000 men to Italy; but, as we shall soon see, the orders of the Government were not much considered by him, and the projected detachment would have so weakened him that a junction of the two armies was an obvious preliminary to it. I take it that the real objection in his mind was the position of his right wing, which, even so late as the 21st August, was extended southwards. As he had got close to the Danube and knew the Archduke was over, he became very naturally more and more anxious about the safety of his right, and the more so as he believed the report spread by the Austrians that part of their force had been sent up the right bank on Günzburg,¹ presumably to prevent a junction. It is not clear whether Ferino had orders for his wide sweep, but he should surely have been instructed to join Moreau if Frolich joined the Archduke, so the absence of the right wing must have been the fault of Moreau, one indeed that would be characteristic of him. Still, I do not think the critics do him justice when they practically ignore the importance of the position of the right wing. Suppose the Archduke had struck back at it in force?

All this is on the supposition that the Archduke remained on the right bank of the river, but when once Moreau knew that the Prince had recrossed, how are we to explain his conduct in not following him, but leaving his track? Possibly he may not have been quite certain on the 19th: Saint-Cyr says it was at Augsburg that he got the confirmation of the news,² but we shall find him on the 20th at Dillingen on the Danube, saying that he believed the Prince, marching for Ingolstadt, intended to join Wartensleben.³ The wish to rejoin his right wing, and selfish disregard for Jourdan, is the only possible explanation of his conduct. Anyhow it is important to remember that he did not follow the Archduke over the river again: at best not quite certain that the Prince was back again on the left bank, he acted

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 176.

² *Ibid.*, 183.

³ *Ibid.*, 413-14.

like a dachshund which follows the trail without looking where the object it pursues has gone. Jomini quite misunderstood the position, which indeed is an incredible one, because he believed that it was not until he was over the river that Moreau learnt the truth.¹

As for his being tied by the orders of the Directory to march on the Tyrol, on the 20th August Moreau wrote from Dillingen to Jourdan, saying that his army had crossed the Danube and that day was taking position on the Lech. The Archduke seemed to be marching towards Ingolstadt, which made him believe that the Prince might reinforce Wartensleben to attack Jourdan: 'I shall not give him time, I shall follow him without halting,' wrote Moreau in a virtuous and praiseworthy mood. If Jourdan learnt that the Archduke had reinforced Wartensleben, Moreau thought he ought not to compromise himself, it was better to lose ground than a battle: he assured Jourdan he would give the Archduke no rest, and the Prince could not get far from him, although his own countermarches had given the Prince three or four days' start.² We shall see how Moreau kept his word. Jourdan replied that Moreau must feel how urgent it was that he should march forward, but the dispatch had done much towards lulling him into a false sense of security.

It will be seen that in this letter of the 20th August Moreau had explained that his march for the Lech had given the Archduke three or four days' start, but he ought to have explained why he had made that march at all. That the Archduke should at some time attempt a concentration against one or other French army must have been an obvious possibility. There was nothing especially skilful in the stroke that the Prince was now dealing: his march against Jourdan, grounded on his knowledge of Moreau's character, was not so dangerous as that of Clairfayt against Jourdan on the Lahn in October 1795, grounded on Clairfayt's knowledge of the character of Pichegru. Such a stroke could only be guarded against either by placing the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' between the Archduke and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', an advantage that Moreau had possessed but lost when he came over to the right bank of the Danube, or else by keeping close in touch with the Archduke, so that he could at best steal

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, ix, 48.

² Jourdan, 121, 312-15; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 180-1, 413-15.

one march in advance. Moreau had let the Archduke go free from Neresheim; and now, when he actually knew that the Prince seemed to be preparing his stroke, and when he was assuring Jourdan he would not give him the time, he was wandering away for Munich.

On the 22nd August Saint-Cyr was ordered to occupy Augsburg and to try to link with the left of the right wing, which was at last approaching the army. In the cavalry engagements which followed, a richly dressed horseman was captured and, being taken for a General, was brought before Saint-Cyr, when he turned out to be one of the burgher guard sent out by the magistrates of the Bavarian town of Augsburg to obtain protection for their town. Delighted with such a chance, Saint-Cyr sent the man back to advise the citizens to close their gates to all troops, and thus to avoid having any combats in their streets. This seemed most fair, and the magistrates followed the advice, so that, when the Austrians, pushed back in front of the French, were driven on the town, they had to circle round the ramparts to gain the bridges, while the worthy citizens mounted on their walls, and enjoyed at their ease the fight below.¹ The enemy was driven over the Lech, and this day Ferino's right wing was at last linked with the main army, from which it had been separated since the crossing of the Rhine.²

The only serious fighting done by the right wing had been the unfortunate and unnecessary affair with the *émigrés* at Ober-Kammlach.³ On the 10th August Condé had withdrawn eastwards to Mindelheim as the French approached. There had been some soreness amongst the Austrians as to the continued retreat, and it was hinted to Condé that an engagement was expected from him. Consequently he planned a night attack on Ober-Kammlach on the 13th August. He had only from 5,000 to 6,000 men, who fought, as always, with the greatest bravery, but at daybreak Condé had to order the retreat and, as some of the gun-horses had been killed, his men harnessed themselves to drag-ropes and brought back the pieces. Each side had, partly purposely, partly unintentionally, misled the

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 181-3.

² Although Ferino is taken as having joined here with the right wing, I think he really only brought one division, the other (Delaborde) still remaining to the south.

³ West of Mindelheim. Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas viii; Vogel, xxvi.

other by their French cries, and at the end, says Savary, 'the victory was sad and silent; our men, in contemplating this horrible field of carnage, could not suppress their regrets that their blows had not fallen on strangers'.¹ The *émigrés* had 540, and their paid troops had 180, killed and wounded.² On the Republican side the company of horse artillery of which the future General Foy was Captain had distinguished itself in the fight and in the pursuit.³ As for the corps of Condé, retiring again, it rejoined the Austrians at Munich on the 25th August.⁴

The intense wrath with which *émigrés* and Republicans had met by the Rhine in 1793 had died down, for, seeing the bravery of the regiments of France, the *émigrés* had lost the resentment they had felt in meeting their former subordinates in the ranks they had abandoned, whilst the constant friction with the Austrians made their sympathy with the soldiers of their own nationality all the stronger. The Duc d'Enghien now said he had fired sixty rounds of case on two French battalions advancing on him with the bayonet. 'Each round cut a gap of twenty paces wide, but did not make them recoil. These are no longer the men of 1793: they are gods. Really I now do not know to which of the two to award the prize for valour, to our troops or to theirs.' It was well that Latour did not know the Prince's opinion that, if they wished, the Republicans could go to Vienna.⁵ The Republicans on their side had lost their horror at finding Frenchmen opposed to them in the ranks of the enemy. Perhaps they felt that the Revolution had not been the unmixed blessing they had dreamt of: certainly they appreciated the devotion, self-abnegation, and bravery of the *émigrés*, and perceived that loyalty might exist as well as patriotism. There was no longer any question of slaughtering prisoners. Moreau received at his table captured *émigrés* of position,⁶ and, if Royalists had to be sent from the army as prisoners, it was with the hope that they would escape on the way. Sometimes the soldiers' conscience

¹ Savary, i, Part I, 11.

² Bittard des Portes, 284-9.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 171; Girod de l'Ain, *Foy*, 16.

⁴ Bittard des Portes, 266-90; De Rison, iii. 64-84; Puymaigre, 30-1; Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 257-8; *Vict. et Conq.*, vi. 293-5; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 169-71; Savary, i, Part I, 11; *De Cézac*, 197-205.

⁵ Bittard des Portes, 284.

⁶ De Rison, iii. 90; Puymaigre, 33; *De Cézac*, 203, 207-12.

enabled them to certify that their prisoners had not had arms in their hands, a 'fact' which sufficed to absolve them.¹ In like manner the prisoners in the hands of the *émigrés* were well treated, so that those captured at Ober-Kammlach were horrified when they found it was proposed to transfer them to the Austrians, and when Condé, wisely sympathizing, got them exchanged, they undertook the dangerous task of transmitting letters to the families of *émigrés*. Abbattucci in a conference had addressed the Duc d'Enghien as 'Monseigneur', which would have cost him his head in 1793.² From the first, as we know, Desaix had had relations, a brother and a cousin, with Condé, and now he often sent them money,³ although it is hard to conceive of a Republican General having any spare cash.

On one occasion, under a tacit truce on the Isar near Munich, *émigrés* and Republicans were conversing amicably across the river, when the Duc d'Enghien came up, and the Republicans, ascertaining who it was, bared their heads whilst he remained.⁴ Had Louis XVIII but appeared, there would have been such a scene as is depicted in *Esmond* where the young Chevalier is recognized by English officers.⁵ Louis, however, was too unwieldy to appear on the field, and he had been forced by Austria to leave the army on the 14th July. A clever man, he was not wanting in one sort of courage, and had not been daunted by an extraordinary outrage. At Dillingen on the 19th July 1796, as he was looking out of a window, a ball grazed his forehead.⁶ One incident shows the curious attitude of the two bodies of French. The *émigrés*, finding that an attack which the Republicans were making on them was stopped from want of ammunition, considered themselves bound also to cease firing, and so informed the Republican commander. Demont in return courteously warned them he would attack with the bayonet, when the *émigrés* explained that they were ready, but that it was not worth while, for they had orders to withdraw and would leave the road open. The Republicans marched on, whilst the *émigrés* saluted, and a sob passed through the Legion of Mirabeau

¹ De Rison, iii. 89-94; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 279-82.

² De Rison, iii. 82-4 note 1; Bittard des Portes, 296; Puymaigre 33-4.

³ De Rison, iii. 38.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 88-9.

⁵ Thackeray, *Esmond*, Book III, Chapter I.

⁶ Bittard des Portes, 259-62; Daudet, *Émigration*, i. 373-5; De Rison, iii. 58-62.

as their white flag drooped and the Tricolours went by, swelled by a wind of Victory.¹

The right wing's advance had been facilitated by Moreau's diplomacy, for, once the French were well over the Rhine, the smaller states saw no advantage to themselves in being made the battle-field on which French and Austrians were to settle their differences, or in being engaged in a quarrel with which they did not think themselves much concerned. Württemberg and Baden signed a definitive peace; the Elector of Saxony made a treaty of neutrality; the Circles of Suabia and Franconia abandoned the Austrians. When Moreau had advanced from the Rhine he had left Reynier at Baden to arrange treaties or armistices with the Princes of Suabia. Then, as always, until in 1866 the heavy heel of the Prussian had crushed the life out of the small states, they were ever ready to open the gate of Germany to the French: a fact too often forgotten by those who declaim against the ambition of France. It is true that these smaller states had a well-grounded suspicion that their interests might be as safe in the hands of the French as in those of the Austrians or of the Prussians, who looked on their neighbours as offering good facilities for bargains: the tiny Princes might pay the cost. The Archduke had thus lost the services of a large number of men, the Suabian troops, for instance, with which the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had had to deal on the passage of the Rhine, whilst the French, besides receiving supplies in horses and cash, gained in security more than the mere change in the numbers seemed to imply.²

At Augsburg Moreau obtained confirmation of the news that the Archduke had marched with a force to strike the right of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' near Neumarkt, and next day, the 23rd August 1796, he assembled his corps commanders, Ferino, Saint-Cyr, and Desaix, to consult on what was to be done. Saint-Cyr proposed to return at once to the left bank of the Danube to the assistance of Jourdan. This was the most obvious course, but Moreau disliked it, believing that Jourdan would be safe if he retreated, and not realizing that his own retreat must

¹ Bittard des Portes, pp. 299-301 note 1, quoting the *Gaulois* of the 9th September 1895, but I fear the more prosaic account of the incident by Saint-Cyr represents the real facts.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, viii. 238-9; Rambaud, 287-8; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 105.

follow that of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Next, Saint-Cyr proposed that, if the whole army were not to march north, at least the left wing and the reserve should be sent after the Archduke. Moreau approved of this, but Desaix, who would have had to command the detachment, strongly objected to the plan, on the ground that he would be placed in a very dangerous position if the Archduke swung back on him. Finally it was determined to try to recall the Archduke by crossing the Lech and attacking the Austrian force in their front.¹ There was much to be said for this plan, for the Archduke had made two serious mistakes. The force left in front of Moreau was meant to be a mere retarding or retaining one, but Latour, whom the Archduke had placed at its head,² was a brave but too pugnacious General. He thought it dishonourable to retreat, and, notwithstanding the French origin of his family, hated the French, or at least the Republicans.³ Also, the force left with him was too strong, as it numbered 30,000 men,⁴ not enough to enable Latour to meet and beat Moreau, but too large to make him anxious to avoid battle. Knowing Latour's character from experience of him in this campaign, Saint-Cyr declared that the General would probably give them an opportunity of seriously maiming him. His troops were much scattered, some being in the Vorarlberg, and Saint-Cyr hoped that he might be given a disabling blow, and that then, leaving a corps in front of him, Moreau might march in force by Ratisbon or Neuburg to the succour of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. The other Generals agreed in principle, but objected that Latour would be too wary to let himself be seriously engaged, and would retreat as soon as he was pressed: Saint-Cyr stuck to his opinion, which soon proved to be correct.⁵

As for this conference, Saint-Cyr makes one very important remark, that in it the only circumstances considered were the necessities of the situation: there was no question of either the plan or the instructions of the Government.⁶ This settles the

¹ Saint Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 183, 204-6.

² Baillet, Comte de La Tour (born about 1750, died 1806), General in the Austrian service, but his family was French by origin. His brother, Comte Baillet, also served against the French, but entered the French army under Napoleon. Michaud, xlv. 347-8.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 208; Bittard des Portes, 307, says he was civil enough to the *émigrés*.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 206-8.

⁴ Archduke Charles, iii. 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

question we have already discussed of how far Moreau believed himself to be tied by the order to detach 15,000 men to Italy, and so removes one possible reason for his crossing to the right bank.

On the 24th August the attack was delivered. In crossing the river, Desaix could get only a few troops over below Augsburg, but Saint-Cyr with the centre, and Ferino with the right, crossed at and above Augsburg, though with much difficulty, for the river was rising. Houel, who was to lead Saint-Cyr's troops, was drowned, and the infantry of Ferino were 'a little discouraged' by seeing their first party swept down the stream,¹ but the troops got across and then attacked Latour, who stood watching from his position on the heights of Friedberg. He had only 6,000 men against some 59,000, but, as Saint-Cyr had prophesied, the sturdy General was unmoved for long by the direct assault of the French centre, and even by the beginning of the flank attack made by Ferino on his left. Too late he realized his danger, and began to retreat. Saint-Cyr had cut the road to Ingolstadt, which Latour should have held above all points, as it communicated with the Archduke and Ferino intercepted the direct road to Munich. The Austrians had to throw themselves into the cross-roads, making off in disorder with the loss of many prisoners and seventeen guns. Duhesme's division, which had been so maltreated at Neresheim, had been given its opportunity of restoring its prestige, and Vandamme, who had a brigade in it, had pursued far with the light cavalry.² Ferino's right wing had been led over the swollen river by his A.D.C., Captain Savary, who found the ford for it and guided the column across, losing, as he says, only some blunderers who were drowned from not knowing how to keep to the ford. He received the congratulations of the Directory for the courage he had shown here and in the pursuit on Munich.³

Houel, an Adjutant-General of great promise, had had one of those premonitions of death common enough in such cases. Reynier insisted that he had found a ford at an unguarded point, while Saint-Cyr, assuming that the fact of the points' being

¹ Ibid., 214.

² Ibid., 209-18, 417-19 and Atlas xii; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 52-3; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 26-31; Archduke Charles, iii. 49-54; Vogel, xxvi.

³ Savary, i, Part I, 11-12.

unguarded probably showed there was no ford there, prepared to pass in front of a strong post of the enemy, whose position seemed to him to indicate the existence of a ford. Houel, ordered to try Reynier's ford, fell into despair and declared that he and some of his men would be drowned there. Saint-Cyr tried to reassure him by saying he would trust the reconnaissance Houel would make, and, if the passage were impracticable, he would call him to another point. Houel found that Reynier's ford did not exist, and his two guides were drowned there. He then came to the other point, where the infantry brigade of Laroche was crossing, with good swimmers stationed below to rescue such men as were swept down. Houel crossed safely with part of his column, and, after posting them, returned to the left bank to bring over the rest, but the river had risen, the ford no longer existed, and he was swept down and drowned by the rising flood.¹

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 210-14.

XV

THE RETREAT OF JOURDAN

(August and September 1796)

The Archduke attacks Jourdan's right. Retreat of the Sambre-et-Meuse. Insubordination of Kléber, Bernadotte, and Colaud. Battles of Würzburg and of the Lahn. Resignation of Jourdan. Death of Marceau.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

8th September. Victory of Bonaparte at Bassano.

15th September. Wurmser besieged in Mantua.

ON the day on which the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was fighting this battle on the Lech, the Archduke was engaged with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' at Amberg, and I must now follow his operations. It was as he established his army on the Naab that Jourdan heard from Bernadotte that his advanced-guard, pushed forward south-east from Deining to Seubersdorf¹ on the Ratisbon road, had learnt from prisoners that the Archduke was coming up from Ratisbon. At first this did not much disturb Jourdan, who believed that Moreau was still on the left bank of the Danube, and, as soon as he knew of the Archduke's march, would try to link his left with the right of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and to attack the Prince. Accordingly his only orders to Bernadotte were not to advance farther, to observe the enemy, and, if forced to retire, to do so to the north-west on Nürnberg, so as not to uncover the right of the army: he was to try to discover where the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was. On the night of the 21st August, however, he heard from Bernadotte that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was on the right bank of the Danube, and he received Moreau's important dispatch of the 20th August, which I have already given.

Even now Jourdan did not see the whole of his danger, or rather, believing in Moreau's assurances, he still thought he could keep his hold on the Naab, not attacking, and hoping not to be attacked. He apparently considered that all he had to meet was a raid of about 20,000 men, which would be halted as

¹ West of Parsberg, Vogel, xxiv.

soon as the movements of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' began to tell. At 8 p.m. on the 22nd August he learnt from Bernadotte that the division had been attacked, and he at once dispatched the cavalry reserve of Bonnaud to reinforce it. If Bonnaud could not reach Bernadotte, he was to retire northward on Amberg. As we shall see, Bonnaud never reached Bernadotte, and it seems a pity that the cavalry had not been sent before to Deining, where it would have been of much more use than in the broken ground which Jourdan was occupying. Obviously Bernadotte, some thirty miles in rear and to the south-west of the right wing, was much in the air. Jourdan had intended him to watch the road from Ingolstadt and to stretch a hand to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', whose exact position was unknown. He believed that he himself was bound to hold his own ground for the time, so as not to abandon Moreau if that General marched northward and thus exposed himself to a backstroke from the Archduke. To Moreau he wrote on the 22nd August, urging him to advance, for, if the Prince defeated Bernadotte, he could then move on the rear of the army and seize the defiles behind it. Apparently he trusted to the advance of Moreau towards him to prevent the Archduke from joining Wartensleben.¹

Bernadotte was now in a position to show his mettle as a General of Division, for the Archduke, with 28,000 men and having an enormous superiority in cavalry, was coming up by the roads from Ingolstadt and Ratisbon to make a mouthful of his 6,000. On the 22nd August he stood behind Deining against the Archduke's attack, and, as the scientific Prince failed to bring up his left wing on the Ingolstadt road, Bernadotte's division held its ground till evening and then drew off. These tactics were repeated on the 23rd at Neumarkt and then at Berg, and finally Bernadotte reached Forchheim, where he was joined by Jourdan on the 27th August. He had lost the Nürnberg road, so valuable for the retreat of the main army, but he had preserved his division intact and had gained time for Jourdan: the Austrians had lost at least as much as he had, and he carried off some sixty prisoners.²

¹ Jourdan, 121-2, 125-6, 314-16; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 414-15; Archduke Charles, iii. 22.

² Jourdan, 120-6, 131-7; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 12-14, 19; Archduke Charles, iii. 19-29, 61-3; Vogel, xxiii, xxiv.

Meanwhile Jourdan, on hearing on the morning of the 23rd August of Bernadotte's retreat, at once prepared for a retirement that should enable him to join Bernadotte and escape the Archduke's threat on his communications. Apparently he assumed, rightly enough, that the Archduke's main body would join Wartensleben, and not give the two French armies the possibility of uniting in his rear by continuing his march northward for Nürnberg. According to Saint-Cyr,¹ Jourdan ought to have adopted one of three courses, all different from that which he followed. He could have struck at once at Wartensleben in his front, so as to maim him before the Archduke could reinforce him : then he could have turned on the Prince. Doubtless this was the scientific plan, and one that Bonaparte would probably have adopted, but Wartensleben had hitherto always withdrawn before any attempt to bring on a decisive affair,² and Jourdan may well have feared that he would only be drawn still farther east, leaving his communications at the mercy of the Archduke. Another course, that of leaving 10,000 men to contain Wartensleben, and of marching with 30,000 to join the 6,000 of Bernadotte, in order to throw back the Prince's 28,000, seems very risky, for Wartensleben was unmaimed, and Jourdan, not having enough superiority over the Archduke to ensure victory, might have found himself checked by the Prince while Wartensleben was driving the containing force westwards. The position of the French on the Naab was such that every movement could be seen by the Austrians, and, when the trains began to move to the rear on the 23rd August, Wartensleben had by the afternoon passed a part of his cavalry over the river and was disturbing the whole line.³ Judge what chance a small force would have had in front of him ! And it must be remembered that Jourdan was not as strong as Saint-Cyr believed.

The third course suggested by Saint-Cyr was that when Bernadotte's warning of the Archduke's approach was received (2 a.m. on the 21st August), immediate preparations for retreat should have been adopted if no stroke was to be attempted against either enemy.⁴ If this course had been adopted, many of the difficulties which actually occurred on the first days of the retreat might have been prevented : certainly Würzburg

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 194-7.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 31-2.

² Jourdan, 112 note 1.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 196-7.

might have been reached safely, supposing always that the Archduke had pottered, as in fact he did. This of course is perfectly true, but it involved taking a selfish view of the situation. By drawing back to safety Jourdan would have left the two bodies of the enemy free to unite at their ease against Moreau, who was presumably coming northwards in some fashion, or else was engaged in dealing Latour such a blow as would recall the Archduke. This is the reason, a very honourable one, given by Jourdan for his delay.¹ He was not a great General and had to face a situation which required the highest skill. Bonaparte would have dealt with it otherwise, but Bonaparte in his Italian struggles had only to think of his own force, and in his case the theatre of some of his finest strokes in Italy by its very confinement and restriction forced his enemy to stand and meet his blow, and did not allow them to baffle him by retreats, as happened in 1814. Anyhow Jourdan gave orders for retreat on Amberg. He could, of course, have turned back again if Moreau had been following the Archduke closely, and if the Prince had shown signs of swinging round on him.

At 11 p.m. on the 23rd August the army left the Naab and retired westwards for Amberg. Here we get a glimpse of Jourdan, as the division of Colaud met him and noticed that he was thoughtful and depressed. A dispatch brought by a squadron of cavalry from Bernadotte had just reached him, and, in order that he might read it, an artillery officer lit a port-fire, by whose smoky glare Jourdan glanced over what must have been bad news, for he carried his hand to his face, with a grieved air, and went aside to give his orders.²

The retreat began badly, for Jourdan, instead of being able to make straight for Sulzbach,³ was obliged to fight at Amberg in order to extricate Bonnaud's cavalry reserve, which had been too late to help Bernadotte, and was now retiring amid clouds of Austrian cavalry, followed by the Archduke's columns from the South. Meanwhile on the east Wartensleben came up and now made his junction with the Archduke.⁴ The Prince treats this engagement as a defeat for Jourdan, but the French held Amberg only to give time to the cavalry to rejoin, and then by

¹ Jourdan, 121-2.

² Bricard, 226.

³ West of Amberg.

⁴ Jourdan, 126-8, 316; Vogel, xxiv.

hard fighting extricated themselves from the bad positions in which they were placed.¹ As night fell they moved off westwards for Sulzbach. Ney, in Colaud's division, once more covered the movement,² but his part in this day's work was disastrous. When retiring through the town, he stood too long at Wiselhof, and the Austrian cavalry surrounded his force. He struggled against heavy odds for long, but at last his horse was shot under him, and the enemy, taking advantage of the confusion into which they had thrown his cavalry, surrounded two battalions of the 23rd Regiment. Ney tried to rescue the infantry, but his cavalry could not face the guns brought up by the Austrians, and he had to retreat, leaving the regiment to its fate. These men of the 23rd Regiment behaved most gallantly and beat off the Austrian horse until they were crushed by case. Then General Werneck in person headed a charge of a cuirassier regiment, which went over them. Ney drew off sadly. Klein, in command of Championnet's rear-guard, had also suffered heavily, and altogether the French lost some 2,000 men. Jourdan, a gentle critic, remarks that Ney's imprudence cost him dear and made him see that courage did not suffice against numbers.³ As I have said, Ney was far from foolhardy, but perhaps his long series of successes had made him too reliant on his skill. Generals seldom improve by practice, and there is a curious resemblance between this affair and that of Foz d'Arouce in Spain.

The situation on the evening of the 24th August, therefore, was that the Archduke had defeated the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' at Amberg, and Moreau had defeated Latour at Friedberg. It was now, says Saint-Cyr, a question which commander would make the better use of his victory. The Archduke, for his part, did not press the pursuit: indeed, his movements from the time he struck Bernadotte had not been rapid. After driving Bernadotte back he divided his forces, leaving a part in rear, whilst he him-

¹ The Prince himself says that 'Jourdan determined to operate his retreat on Sulzbach', and commenced it before the Austrians could attack his centre. Archduke Charles, iii. 41.

² Bricard, 226-7; Jourdan, 127-31; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 15-19; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 11-16; Archduke Charles, iii. 32-42. Lefebvre's division was to the west and was not engaged.

³ Ney, i. 167-9; Jourdan, 129-30; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 18-19; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 14-16; Bricard, 226-8; Archduke Charles, iii. 41-2.

self marched against Jourdan. He had boldly disclaimed any fear of what Moreau might do in his rear, but he was not above being influenced by the fate of the force which he had left in front of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. 'Let Moreau go even to Vienna,' he had said, 'that will matter little if I beat Jourdan!' But, on hearing of Latour's defeat, the high resolve expressed in this admirable and much-quoted sentiment gave way, and on the 27th August he sent back from Neumarkt a force of eight battalions and twenty-seven squadrons (about 10,000 men) under Nauendorf to recross the Danube and check the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.¹ It certainly looks as if Saint-Cyr was right in believing that a rapid pursuit of Latour would have brought back the Prince at once.² Moreau, however, as Saint-Cyr goes on to say, was more embarrassed on the day after his victory than he had been on the day before it. Yet he had the whole of his army in hand,³ whilst Latour's troops were scattered: I have mentioned the detachment in the Vorarlberg; Frolich had 11,800 men far south at Schongau on the Lech; lower down that river was Condé's corps at Landsberg; and to the north was Mercantin at Rain with 7,300 men.⁴ Latour had had 6,000 at Friedberg and in front of Augsburg. If, therefore, Moreau had marched on at once, he could have forestalled the enemy at Freising, Moosburg, or Landshut, and could have crushed Latour.

But, instead of making a vigorous pursuit of the enemy, he hesitated and moved forward so slowly that on the 30th August Saint-Cyr was only at Pfaffenhofen. Moreau had intended that Desaix should on the next day attack Ingolstadt on the right bank, but Latour on this occasion made better use of his audacity. He had drawn back to the right of the Isar, but now, with a firm reliance on the caution of Moreau, he recrossed the Isar with a part of his right wing, and marched north along the front of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to join Nauendorf. Nauendorf, with the reinforcement from the Archduke, had crossed the Danube at Ingolstadt, and the junction was made between Siegenburg and Neustadt. On the 1st September, as Desaix

¹ Archduke Charles, iii. 65.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 218-20.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 54; Archduke Charles, iii. 57. Unless Jomini is right in putting Delaborde's division still at Kempten.

⁴ Archduke Charles, iii. 49-50; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 51-3; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas viii; Vogel, xxiii, xxvi.

was advancing to the attack of Ingolstadt, the two Austrian Generals fell on him between Geisenfeld and Reichertshofen, that is to say, between the Paar and the Ilm rivers. Desaix beat them off, but he was apparently so absorbed in the struggle that he never sent word to Moreau, who remained with Saint-Cyr at Pfaffenhofen, not hearing the guns and not sending for news of the attack he had ordered. Thus Saint-Cyr's troops were not used at all, and Moreau missed the chance of a telling return blow at the audacious enemy. The day must have been a trying one for Desaix and, when Reynier came at night to get an account of the fight, he had much trouble to awake him. Delmas's division of the left wing, in which Oudinot had a brigade, had not been seriously engaged, so Oudinot still remained unwounded.¹

Hitherto Desaix, having been on the left and, during the advance through the Black Forest, in rear, had not had much fighting, except in the unfortunate battle at Malsch or Ettlingen. Now he had had his day. He must have been much outnumbered, especially in cavalry, for he had left Saint-Cyr six battalions of Beaupuis' division and a cavalry regiment, and, of the troops actually with him (who included some of the cavalry of the reserve), Delmas's division did little but make a reconnaissance of Ingolstadt. But Desaix had been completely victorious and had won the praises of the Archduke, who says that he displayed great energy, a correct eye, and perfect knowledge of the employment of each arm. Taken in flank on his march, he changed front to the left, refused that flank because it was most threatened, and formed an almost impregnable position on his centre, which the Austrians could most easily reach. At first he did not know the real point of attack, and, says the Archduke, he had his right too far advanced, abreast of the St. Cast chapel, from which it was driven; but the position had the advantage of being surrounded by a ravine, and he hoped by it to prevent the Austrians' debouching from the forest of Geisenfeld. Although he had to abandon this part of his position, he retook it at the end of the day, capturing a howitzer.²

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 54-7; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 222-31 and Atlas viii; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 32-7; Archduke Charles, iii. 82-96; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 105-6; Vogel, xxiv.

² Archduke Charles, iii. 92-3.

Meanwhile the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was passing through a critical period. By the 28th August the army, having joined Bernadotte, who was at Forchheim, was once more concentrated, and now lay along the Wiesent. The most dangerous part of the retreat had been accomplished, and the road down the Regnitz to Bamberg was held by Jourdan. It was true that the enemy had forces at Nürnberg, nearer than the French to the line of communication with France by Würzburg, but surely Moreau, who had promised to follow the Archduke, would now be at Donauwörth or on the left bank of the Danube to the north of that town, so that the troops at Nürnberg would be caught between him and Jourdan?

Dividing his forces at Neumarkt, as I have said, the Archduke had advanced in two directions northwards, so that two points of an open compass were presented to Jourdan. At Amberg Jourdan had slid by the eastern point, but now the other or western point had reached the Main in his rear, pushing behind Bernadotte at Forchheim, and actually crossing the Main at Eltmann:¹ indeed, Jourdan's Chief of the Staff, Ernouf, with all the head-quarters staff, was only saved from capture in Bamberg by the opportune arrival of one of Bernadotte's A.D.C.'s with a squadron. It might have been best to fall back on Bamberg, and to continue the retreat down the right bank of the Main for Schweinfurt, brushing aside any parties of the enemy found in front. Jourdan, however, was in a fighting humour, and determined to cross the Regnitz to the west and deliver a blow at Hotze, commanding the Archduke's left, whom he expected to find at Höchststadt.² His first attempt to cross below Bamberg failed from want of bridges, but on the 29th August Bernadotte, heading the column and passing through Bamberg, turned southwards, down the left bank of the Regnitz. Next day Jourdan prepared to attack Hotze at Burgebrach,³ but in reconnoitring he found that the enemy had been reinforced, and most unfortunately jumped to the conclusion that Hotze had been joined by the Archduke. He therefore turned round, crossed the Main, and retired westwards down the right bank of the river for Schweinfurt, which was reached on the

¹ North-west of Bamberg, Vogel, xviii.

² West of Forchheim, Vogel, xxiii.

³ South-west of Bamberg, Vogel, xxiii.

31st August. He had made an unfortunate mistake, for Hotze had only called back his advanced parties from the Main, thus opening the road to Schweinfurt. Another part of his force had come up from the south, but the Archduke was still at Forchheim, planning an attack on the French left wing. Thus, while Jourdan had been sweeping round from north to south with the head of his army to attack the advanced troops of his pursuer, the Archduke, instead of pressing on with his main body to join the head of his own army, was turning off eastwards against the rearmost French troops. Jourdan had been given a good chance of striking a blow that would almost certainly have been successful, and would probably have rendered any retreat beyond Würzburg unnecessary.¹ The Archduke's attack on his rear would not have come to much, as Kléber with the left wing had been coming down the Regnitz, drawing away from the Prince.² That the retreat had been an orderly one is shown by the fact that 122 guns, taken from Bamberg, Forchheim, and Königshofen, were brought to Schweinfurt and abandoned there only to lighten the trains.³

Soult and his brigade of Lefebvre's division had had their own adventure, much in the style of that of June 1796. When Jourdan had been retreating with the main army on the Wiesent, the left wing had made a detour to the north by Pegnitz,⁴ and, when it arrived on the Wiesent, Soult had been pushed out to the north-east to guard the left flank with his brigade, a cavalry regiment, and a battery, apparently at Muggendorf.⁵ On the 30th August Lefebvre's division left Hallstadt, just north of Bamberg, and retired down the right bank of the Main, and on the same day the Austrians occupied Bamberg.⁶ The messengers sent to inform Soult had been intercepted, and he could only guess what was happening by the sound of firing from the direction of Bamberg. But, as he was preparing to march on Bamberg, he found himself facing troops whom he could hardly

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 243.

² For the retreat from Forchheim to Schweinfurt see Jourdan 137-49; *Pajol*, i. 357-61; *Pajol, Kléber*, 239-40; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 21-7; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 20-4; Bricard, 233-5; Archduke Charles, iii. 64-81; Vogel, xxiv, xxiii, xviii.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 130.

⁴ *Pajol*, i. 355-61; *Pajol, Kléber*, 238-40.

⁵ North-east of Ebermannstadt, Vogel, xxiv, but he says Mockendorff, which I cannot find.

⁶ Archduke Charles, iii. 75.

contain, while a still stronger body closed his line of retreat. His position seemed desperate, but, not giving time to his men to be discouraged, he formed them up as if he meant to break through in rear towards Bamberg. The enemy concentrated on that side to oppose him, and this gave him his opportunity: he at once turned north, away from Bamberg and the army, but also away from the enemy, hoping to cross the Upper Main at Lichtenfels.¹ A thick wood on the route helped him to delay the pursuit, and he got across a marsh which the enemy had neglected, believing it to be impracticable. This enabled him to turn to his left and to reach the Main farther south than he had hoped and, as night fell, he saw the river at Baunach² with troops on both banks. Feeling sure that these were French, he sent forward a party to communicate with them. To his great surprise, his men were fired on, but he persuaded himself that it must be a mistake, which the increasing darkness would make dangerous. His brother was with him as A.D.C., and Soult ordered him to go forward and make certain what troops were in front, even if he had to let himself be taken in doing so. Pierre Soult,³ who 'joined to great valour rare devotion', dashed forward and got unhurt through the fire opened on him. Then a cheer told Soult that the brigade was safe, and in a moment he was receiving congratulations all the warmer because the enemy had spread news of his capture. He explains that he gives these details as furnishing one more occasion for remembering that in war there is hardly any situation, however desperate it may seem at first, whence you cannot extricate yourself with success, if, mindful of your duty, you preserve the *sang-froid* that inspires confidence in those who are round you.⁴ So thought and proved the young General of Brigade on the Main; so thought and proved the Marshal at Oporto, with one difference. In 1796 he was in full health, with troops to be trusted to death: in 1809 he was maimed, and had doubtful lieutenants.

A period of great danger had been passed. On the 29th August the divisions had been much scattered, and it had been open to the Archduke to disregard the march of the French left

¹ On the Main, north-east of Bamberg, Vogel, xviii.

² On the Main, north of Bamberg, Vogel, xviii.

³ Pierre Soult, a *sous-lieutenant* of infantry. He had been A.D.C. to his brother since the 11th Oct. 1794, when Jean Soult had been promoted General of Brigade, *Fastes*, iii. 563.

⁴ Soult, i. 312-16.

wing on Bamberg, to cross the Regnitz above Kléber, and to march north-west. He might then have made short work of the French force lying between the Main and the Regnitz, and could even have reached Schweinfurt by Gerolzhofen¹ before Jourdan could do so, if this had not left the junction with Moreau open. Indeed, one cannot help suspecting that here, as elsewhere, he was thinking much more of Moreau than he believed in later days, and was unwilling to commit himself fully against Jourdan. On the other hand, a delay in Kléber's march had lost a day and prevented Jourdan from striking Hotze on the 28th, when he certainly might have cut through to the Würzburg road. Still, Jourdan's pride is justifiable when he points out that he had got away from an enemy, superior by 25,000 men and with a numerous cavalry, without being crushed or losing artillery or carriages. Two battalions had been wrecked at Amberg by the unfortunate obstinacy of Ney, but the Archduke had expected far more than this when he crossed to the left bank of the Danube.²

Unfortunately Jourdan, influenced by very honourable motives, determined on conduct bolder than his strength warranted. Instead of retiring towards Gemünden across the mouth of the loop which the Main here makes, he resolved to march southward right into the loop for Würzburg,³ which he believed to be still held by the garrison he had left there. Indeed, General Bollemont, commanding his artillery, had just gone to arrange for replenishing the ammunition of the army from the stores in the town. Once at Würzburg, he would have recovered a better road for his retreat; but there were other reasons, called by Jomini too honourable not to be excusable.⁴ The long and glorious history of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' would have been tarnished, and its troops demoralized, if, without having taken the decision of battle, it had fled to the Lahn, securing its own safety, but leaving Moreau alone in Germany. The Directory could not understand the retreat, and urged Jourdan to keep his hold on the Regnitz; while Moreau from the beginning of the Archduke's movement had promised to support his comrade. Really Jourdan was too late and too weak for the stroke

¹ West of Bamberg, north-east of Würzburg, Vogel, xxiii.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 26; Jourdan, 148-9.

³ Vogel, xviii, xxiii.

⁴ Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 27-8; Jourdan, 150-2.

he planned : the mistake was a natural and a pardonable one, but it was made disastrous by two things. At Burgebrach, on the 30th August, he had drawn back when he might have struck with advantage, believing wrongly the Archduke to be in his front. Now he marched on Würzburg, where he was almost certain to meet the mass of the Austrians, believing he would meet only their advanced guard under Hotze. Secondly, his tendency was to scatter his divisions, and he left Lefebvre at Schweinfurt from prudential motives, although he required every man of his force with him.

To be successful, the blow should have been a rapid one, delivered with all the force the army was capable of, but Jourdan was more resolute and sanguine than many of his officers, who believed they were about to have a time of rest when the retreat should be finished, and so to escape from the strain they had been under since the Naab. Neither Generals nor their men always appreciate strategy, and the constant retreat, made without motives that could be apparent to all, had irritated the troops and had shaken their confidence more, perhaps, than a defeat would have done. For years Jourdan had succeeded in the difficult task of controlling and using his lieutenant, Kléber, but now Kléber broke loose from all subjection, and led what was almost a mutiny amongst the Generals. Always impracticable in his temper, and naturally irritated by the inevitable troubles of the retirement, Kléber had been still more vexed by the effect of the orders he had received from Jourdan. Several times, when his wing had finished its march and the troops were preparing to rest for the night, fresh orders from the Commander-in-Chief had set them again in motion and had caused an amount of suffering and discontent that can be imagined.¹ This time Kléber at Lauringen,² well away from the Main, believed his wing was to start next day north-west to reach the Saale at Kissingen, but he was ordered back on Schweinfurt to join in the march on Würzburg. He did not like retreats, we are told, and this one, made without much actual pressure from the enemy, had been the more objectionable to him.

¹ This will be better understood by following in Pajol's work the march of Lefebvre's division from the 26th August to the 1st September.

² North-east of Schweinfurt, Vogel, xviii.

Neither Jourdan nor Ernouf had the long regimental experience that is so necessary, if the staff of an army is to realize the needless misery that can be inflicted by hasty moves and shifts of quarters, even in peace time, and it is likely enough that Kléber had much reason for his dissatisfaction. The men too were almost exhausted, and the gun teams lay down under the whip.¹ Unluckily on the 1st September Kléber made his representations with all the warmth and bitterness natural to him. Jourdan, himself grievously tried, probably was in no humour to bear opposition at such a critical moment: resenting both the manner and matter of his lieutenant's remonstrances, he reprimanded him, and even, it is said, placed him in arrest. On this Kléber threw up his command.² The mischief did not end there, for several Generals were devoted to him, and of these Bernadotte and Colaud followed the example set, not only resigning their commands, but even, it would seem, leaving their divisions at once. The injurious effect of this action on the discipline and on the confidence of the army in its chief can be imagined. Bernadotte, it is true, retook his command when the army reached the Lahn, but by that time the battle of Würzburg had been fought and lost. Colaud, a great adherent of Kléber, and as difficult a man to satisfy, persisted in his conduct,³ so his division, already weakened by losses, was broken up and divided amongst those of Lefebvre, Bernadotte, and Grenier: Ney went to Grenier's division.

Notwithstanding all this, Jourdan, with the stubbornness that formed part of his quiet character, still clung to his plan of moving on Würzburg, and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' accordingly marched south on that town under conditions sufficiently discouraging in themselves to cause defeat. At first, believing that the place was still held by the garrison he had left there, he intended to march down the eastern side of the loop of the Main for Dettelbach⁴ and Kitzingen.⁵ Then, in case the Arch-

¹ Bricard, 230, 235.

² Pajol, *Kléber*, 240.

³ Colaud's dissatisfaction is denied in *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 65 note, and Jourdan attributes his withdrawal to ill-health, Jourdan, 152, but see Chuquet, *Hondschoote*, 195-6; *Biog. des Cont.*, i. 1032; Pajol, i. 362; Pajol, *Kléber*, 240. Bernadotte's absence is attributed to an abscess in his head. He rejoined at Limburg, *Fastes*, i. 340.

⁴ East of Würzburg.

⁵ South-east of Würzburg.

duke had, as he believed probable, sent back a part of his troops to the left bank of the Danube to face Moreau (which, as we know, he had done), the army could advance rapidly south-east on Nürnberg. On the other hand, if the Archduke came up in full force, the army could dispute the passage of the Main, with Würzburg at its back as a support. The Archduke might, it is true, throw parties across the mouth of the loop on the line of communication at Gemünden, but he was unlikely to march there in force, since his own communication with the troops facing the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' would be cut, and the two French armies would be free to join. At nightfall on the 1st September, however, Jourdan heard that the Austrians had appeared before Würzburg, and, not knowing that they had been in sufficient force to occupy the town and to drive the small garrison into the citadel, he believed he could save the place by marching direct on it. Lefebvre, who was to the north-east, was called in to Schweinfurt, which he was to hold, in order to cover the trains and the road to France if the army failed to cut through by Würzburg. This, as we shall see, was an unfortunate resolution. Jourdan himself marched south on the 2nd September with the divisions of Simon (late Bernadotte) and Championnet, preceded on the 1st by Bonnaud's cavalry reserve. Grenier was to follow when relieved by Lefebvre at Schweinfurt.¹

About noon on the 2nd September Bonnaud's cavalry appeared before Würzburg, which was found occupied by the Austrians, although the small French garrison of the citadel, only 600 men, did their best throughout the contest to distract the attention of the enemy. The army had been skirmishing with the troops of Hotze during its march, and by the end of the day it lay in line in front of the place. This was the time at which an attack would have been successful, but Grenier's division did not arrive till nightfall. Jourdan understood now that the Archduke might arrive in time, and that prudence counselled retreat due north, but the troops, depressed hitherto by the retreat, had been excited by the advance and the combats during the day, and longed once more to measure themselves against the enemy they had so often beaten. After the struggle with Kléber, Jourdan must have felt that his hold on his army would be dangerously weakened if he now called off

¹ Jourdan, 153-6.

his men just as they thought themselves launched into battle. To do so he considered would have dishonoured himself, and there are occasions, as for instance at Albuera, when even such a commander as Wellington thinks the army must have its head.¹ Also the forces he had met seemed to be inferior to his; the fatal belief that Moreau must be stirring and forcing the Archduke to detach to the left of the Danube influenced him, and he thought he might yet snatch an advantage before the Prince could get up.² Although he was always impenitent on the point, it seems a pity he did not accept the full risk and call up the 12,000 men of Lefebvre lying idle in rear, who would have saved the battle, or, had that still been lost, would have made him all the stronger to cut his way back to safety. As it was, his three divisions lay in a long thin line without any reserve.³

Had he known it, a storm was coming up rapidly on his left flank, for the Archduke, the moment he heard of the march on Würzburg, had sent a force to observe Lefebvre, and on the night of the 2nd September the rest of his troops marched to cross the eastern limb of the loop of the Main at Schwarzach, and to fall on the left of Jourdan. During the 2nd September Jourdan had, as he expected, only to do with the troops of Hotze, the left of the Archduke, strengthened by those of Sztarray, who had joined the right of Hotze. Now on the 3rd September, while a fog covered the movement, the Archduke's force was crossing the Main, one column under Kray then swinging to the right by Prosselsheim, to turn Jourdan's left, which was in the air, while Wartensleben with the rest went straight on to join the right of the troops facing the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. At 7 a.m. the fog lifted, and an obstinate battle began with the Austrians already in front of Würzburg. Jourdan was swinging his left, Grenier and Bonnaud's cavalry reserve, round to cut the enemy from the Main, when Grenier saw the immense column of the enemy's cavalry, the first of the reinforcements, coming from the river and making for his left flank, so he halted to cover the Schweinfurt road. The cavalry storm fell first on him. Jourdan sent up Bonnaud's cavalry reserve, and, as usual, joined them himself, with the divisional cavalry of Championnet

¹ Stanhope, 90.

² Jourdan, 158-60.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 106, 118.

and of Grenier, to resist the attack. Wartensleben, now having his revenge for his long retreat, had brought up twenty-four squadrons of cuirassiers, which with the light cavalry attacked the French horse. Bonnaud beat back the first attack, but it was necessary to employ all the French cavalry, and they in their turn, notwithstanding the efforts of Jourdan and Bonnaud, were overthrown by twelve squadrons of cuirassiers from the Austrian reserve. The French cavalry had to take shelter from the storm behind their infantry, which stood firm.

It was hopeless for the extended French front to continue the struggle against the increasing force of the enemy, and Jourdan therefore ordered the retreat. Not only had he failed to seize the road running through Würzburg for Hanau and Frankfurt, but he had lost the road to Schweinfurt, by which he had moved to the battle, so that all he could do was to retire due north on Arnstein. Grenier covered the movement: his advanced guard, under Ney, had still been on the left at Ober-Pleischfeld when Kray's cavalry came up by Neuses and fell on it. Ney was closely pressed, and several times was nearly surrounded, but Grenier sent up reinforcements to a neighbouring height, and Ney, joining them, held the position for long with the greatest obstinacy. Jourdan reformed his army in rear of the Kurnach ravine. Bad as was his position, he was saved by the circum-spection of his adversary, who, after passing the ravine, waited to form his troops in two lines with his heavy cavalry in rear: when, as the Prince himself says, 'the combat then degenerated into a heavy cannonade'.¹ Leaving the enemy to his parade movements, Jourdan retired through and by the skirts of the great Gramschatzer Wald, and that night reached Arnstein.² The main body of the enemy had halted at Rimpf, on the southern point of the Gramschatzer Wald, and the only pursuit had been by the cavalry. Marching north by Hammelburg, on the 6th the army was at Brückenau. Lefebvre, calling in Soult from Königshofen, had moved from Schweinfurt by Bad Kissingen and now formed the rear-guards.³ The loss in all the fighting

¹ Archduke Charles, iii. 112.

² About the centre of the loop of the mouth the Main makes between Gemünden and Schweinfurt.

³ For the battle of Würzburg see Jourdan, 153-72; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 27-37; *Vict. et Cong.*, vii. 56-71; Bricard, 235-8; Archduke Charles, iii. 99-125. For plan see Jomini, *Atlas*, 16; *Vict. et Cong.*, vii. 54; Vogel, xxiii.

at Würzburg had been seven guns and about 2,000 men, half of whom were prisoners. Of the future Marshals only Jourdan and Ney had been present. Turning north-west from Brückennau, the army crossed the Kinzig at Schlüchtern, and at last on the 9th September passed the Lahn at Wetzlar, and was again extended along that river. The important junction with Marceau and with the large force left to blockade Mayence and other places had also been made. The main body of the Austrians, instead of pursuing, had turned off to the west by Aschaffenburg for Frankfurt, sending only two small parties after the army. By pressing the march of his main body the Archduke, having the shorter route, might have cut in between Jourdan and Marceau, and thrown the French army far down the river, even if he did not crush Marceau. Not only had he failed to do this, but, much to his disgust, the strong garrison of Mayence had remained quietly in the place without disturbing the blockading force. On the 6th September Marceau's advanced posts had felt the Archduke. Raising the blockade of Kastel and Mayence on the right bank on the 8th September, Marceau joined the army on the Lower Lahn on the 10th. He brought the 12,000 men who had been blockading Mayence on the right bank: Poncet's division of 4,000 men still blockaded Ehrenbreitstein and covered the communications, while the Archduke gained the garrison of Mayence, 16,200, besides the garrisons of Mannheim and Philippsburg, 11,630, which were now set free.¹

Now, at last, when the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had been thrown back on the Rhine, leaving the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' exposed in Germany, the Directory remembered that there was an Armée du Nord lying idle at their disposal. Of this force two divisions, one from Belgium under Castilverd, and the other from Holland under Macdonald, who took command of both, were sent up the Rhine to support Jourdan. Had this been done, not in September, but in July, these troops could have relieved part of Marceau's force, and the difference this would have made in the campaign can be estimated. Indeed, had Jourdan had this reinforcement at Würzburg, he would probably have been con-

¹ For the retreat from Arnstein to the Lahn see Jourdan, 173-80; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 37-8; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 71-5; Bricard, 239-248; Archduke Charles, iii. 126-38; Vogel, xviii.

fidest of cutting his way through and would have brought up Lefebvre, so that the increase on the field would have been nearly three divisions. Also, he would have attacked the day before the Archduke arrived. For the moment Macdonald's division halted at Düsseldorf, whilst Castelford's was brought up and placed under Marceau on the Lower Lahn as part of the right wing. Poncet's division was brought up from the blockade of Ehrenbreitstein, which was entrusted to two regiments and some cavalry. Only one division, that of Marceau, now commanded by Hardy, was now on the left of the Rhine, and it fell back from the blockade of Mayence to the Nahe. What with the junction with the left wing, the blockading force of Marceau, and with Castelford, the army was increased altogether by some 20,000 men, and was now about 50,000 strong.¹

Jourdan's personal position was peculiar, for he was little more than a temporary commander. On arrival at Schweinfurt during the retreat, that is, before his defeat at Würzburg, finding his army unfit to retake the offensive, and himself depressed by the struggle with Kléber and the Generals, he had sent in his resignation to the Directory, and, not receiving any answer, had renewed his application. Naturally he attributed his retreat to the want of support from Moreau, while that commander was alleging to the Directory that it was the retreat of Jourdan which had spoilt his own operations.² Jourdan knew that the Directory wished him to strengthen his left and to keep away from the Rhine. He himself would rather have retired much farther to the Wied in rear of Altenkirchen, as every yard he drew the Archduke down the river was so much gain to Moreau, for the Archduke, having come so far, would hardly dare turn south as long as the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was intact and ready to follow on his traces. Such a retreat, however, would have been a crime in the eyes of the Directory, and Jourdan remembered old days when commanders had to answer with their heads. Consequently he stood on the Lahn, guarding the two main *débouchés*, Limburg and Wetzlar, and so placing his troops as to try with some success to make the Archduke believe that he meant to attack. All that he really hoped for was to hand over the army in that position to his successor. On the 9th September the Directory, yielding, they said, to his importunity, and

¹ Jourdan, 182.

² Ibid., 182-3; Barras, ii. 205.

stating that his services required that he should be given an honourable and important post, ordered him to change places with Beurnonville, then commanding the 'Nord'. Under such circumstances he stood to resist the Archduke.¹

Could Jourdan's retreat have been avoided if there had been better co-operation between the two French armies? The thoughts of Moreau, as far as we know them, unfortunately only through the hostile medium of Saint-Cyr, are very curious. The communication between the armies was for long uncut, and he knew of the more important movements of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. When Jourdan was defeated at Amberg on the 24th August, Saint-Cyr and perhaps other Generals told him, 'Take care, you will see the events of the last campaign renew themselves: Jourdan will retire to the Rhine'. But he replied, 'No, for that army has not been beaten; Bernadotte's division has been struck at Neumarkt, only that of Colaud suffered at Amberg, but the left wing, with Kléber, was absent. Jourdan is going to collect his army on one point or another, on the Wiesent or the Upper Main, where he will find good supports in the places of Forchheim and Würzburg. He will give battle to the Archduke, who has lost his superiority over him by sending Nauendorf back to Latour.' When again warned, after Jourdan had been defeated at Würzburg, Moreau, who himself was on the Isar, replied, 'Jourdan has only got the worst of it because he has not fought with his whole army, Kléber being, as at Amberg, away from the field of battle with the left wing, but Jourdan will probably collect his army between Frankfurt and Friedberg. He will order up a part of the corps of Marceau, which is about to be relieved in front of Mayence by two divisions of the Armée du Nord, under Generals Castilverd and Macdonald; and with such powerful reinforcements Jourdan would be so superior to the Archduke that he could not fail to retake the offensive at once, whilst, owing to the position occupied by the army of the "Rhin-et-Moselle", that Prince is about to find himself in the greatest embarrassment.'²

All this sounds much more like a man endeavouring to make peace with his own conscience, than a General loyal to the comrade on whom the stress of war has passed. This is not the Moreau of the letter of the 20th August, determined to be swift

¹ Jourdan, 184-6, 349-52.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 247-9.

on the traces of the Archduke : the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' is in his eyes capable of saving itself, and, when it has done so, Moreau will make it embarrassing for the Archduke. If he fully believed his own words, he condemned his fumbings and gropings, the slow marches eastwards, the passages from the left to the right and from the right to the left of the Danube. If the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' could deal with the Archduke, all the more reason for the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to push on eastwards, as every step forward that Moreau made would put the Archduke in a worse position when he returned after breaking his teeth on Jourdan. It is evident that Moreau was puzzled what to do. He would not take the proper course of going to the succour of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', nor would he take the heroic course of pushing on by himself. He hung in the wind till events forced him to a determination. And this is the commander some men treat as the rival of the swift-striking Napoleon ! It is pleasant to imagine Moreau in Bonaparte's position in January 1797, and having to decide how to meet Alvinzi at Rivoli and Provera at Mantua.

Still, however Moreau might argue to comfort himself, he felt that something must be done at least to seem to support Jourdan. On the 7th September a further advance of the army eastwards had brought the centre and left to the Abens river, where Saint-Cyr had a successful affair at Mainburg, and where the Austrians lost two guns.¹ That night the two Generals in front of Moreau separated : Latour retired south-east on Landshut, and Nauendorf, whose business was to cover the rear of the Archduke, marched northwards on Abensberg to protect Ratisbon. The Archduke, when he had detached Nauendorf to co-operate with Latour, had not placed him under his command, and henceforward, says Saint-Cyr, began misunderstandings between the two Generals, which increased with time, and which did much harm to the Austrians.² This seems sound enough, but the Archduke rather plumes himself on his conduct in this matter. He wanted his rear covered, but Latour thought only of protecting Austria by a cordon, and retired from the Isar to the Inn, whilst Nauendorf refused to join him and declared that he would not leave the Danube. Nauendorf was

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 245-7 ; Archduke Charles, iii. 146 ; *Vict. et Cong.*, vii. 92-3.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 247.

too junior an officer to have been put over Latour and other Generals, but it is rather quaint to find the Archduke priding himself on getting part of his detachment in front of Moreau to follow his instructions, surely with considerable danger, not only to his two commanders from their isolation, but also to himself. I presume that slowness of communication and excessive regard for seniority prevented his superseding Latour by some senior and more obedient commander.¹

Next Moreau, having given up all idea of a bold march eastwards, tried a half-hearted movement on the left bank of the Danube, an operation useful enough to Jourdan if it had been made when the Archduke started, but without effect now. On the 10th September Desaix with most of the left wing crossed at Neuburg,² Saint-Cyr with the centre and the rest of the left wing following the same day. Ferino with the right³ had been on the Isar, trying to cross at Munich, which the Bavarians held against both French and Austrians. He was now drawn right back to Friedberg.⁴ At all times Moreau had a strange liking for half-measures, as well as a tendency to leave small parts of his army in dangerous positions, like so much cheese in an unset rat-trap. Now, instead of taking the whole of the left wing and of the centre over the Danube, he placed Delmas, under whom was General Oudinot, with four battalions and two cavalry regiments at Zell⁵ to watch the bridgehead of Ingolstadt. To complicate matters further, the small *avant-garde* of Saint-Cyr, under Demont, was placed on the right of Delmas, but remained under Saint-Cyr's orders, so that Delmas was sandwiched between two parts of the centre. It will be seen that in making this movement the army had at first to draw back westwards, and this looked so like a retreat that Moreau ordered that the troops should be informed that it really was an advance on Ingolstadt and on the rear of the Archduke, designed to call

¹ 'This measure' (leaving the two Generals independent of one another), 'in ordinary cases so dangerous when it is a question of attaining the same end, was very useful on this occasion.' Archduke Charles, iii. 147-8.

² West of Ingolstadt.

³ I think Saint-Cyr often speaks of the right when he really means only the division of Ferino. The division of Delaborde seems to have remained isolated near the mountains. Archduke Charles, iii. 146; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 54, 58.

⁴ Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 52, 54; Archduke Charles, iii. 146-7, 192-3; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 246, 251, 253. This Friedberg is just east of Augsburg.

⁵ South-east of Neuburg.

him off Jourdan. It is true that, once over, Desaix did push on to Eichstätt, and then to Heideck, but this movement, which would have been sensible enough in August, was absurd now that Jourdan had been driven right back to the Lahn.¹

Nauendorf, following Desaix, had crossed the Danube and had marched on Eichstätt, whilst Latour, reinforcing himself with the corps of Condé, &c., as he marched, came up by Pfaffenhofen; then, instead of following Nauendorf as the French expected, on the 14th September, covered by a fog, he fell on Delmas, who had concentrated between Bruck and Zell. Although completely outnumbered, the French resisted bravely. Delmas, charging with a cavalry regiment, was wounded and had to leave the field: Oudinot then took command and in his turn led on two cavalry regiments, who stopped the enemy's advance until more of their horse arrived. Oudinot was then wounded, and indeed Curély says he and Delmas were left for dead on the field. Hitherto the blockade of Ingolstadt had kept Oudinot employed and away from actual fighting. Now he made up for lost time by receiving a musket ball through his thigh, three sabre cuts on his neck, and one on his arm, so that he had to leave the field. The affair seemed so serious that Moreau himself came over from the left bank, to find his detachment on the point of being crushed. He now took command himself, sending to Saint-Cyr for reinforcements. A special Providence seemed to watch over the detachments that Moreau flung about him, for Saint-Cyr, quite awake to the danger of Delmas, had already hurried over Duhesme's division, and the day was retrieved. Meanwhile Desaix had found no trace either of Jourdan or of the Archduke, and Moreau called him in, just as Nauendorf, who had been delayed, was about to attack him.²

Whether he really believed, as the Archduke assumes, that Jourdan would be able to retake the offensive,³ or whether he was simply puzzled, Moreau now drew back to the right bank by Neuburg, Saint-Cyr re-crossing on the 15th, and Desaix with

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 240-54 and Atlas viii; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 57-8; *Vict. et Cong.*, vii. 92-3; Archduke Charles, iii. 191-6; Vogel, xxiii, xxiv.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 254-6; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 58-61; *Vict. et Cong.*, vii. 94-6; Nollet, 13-14; Curély, 111-12; Archduke Charles, iii. 197-8; Vogel, xxvii.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 199. Compare Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 248-9.

the reserve on the 16th September. Marching to its right flank, or southward, by the 18th September the whole army was in front of Augsburg and east of it, the centre being by Aichach.¹ During part of this flank march, on the 17th September, Saint-Cyr had an opportunity of showing his quaint ideas. Marching south-west from Neuburg on Pöttmes, he had to pass along the front of Condé's *émigré* corps, whose guns opened on his flank. His horse artillery came into action, but Saint-Cyr rode up and ordered them to limber up and move on with the column, remarking that the ground occupied by the enemy had been assigned by Moreau to Desaix's troops, who must not be deprived of the pleasure of driving the enemy from it. The Austrians, surprised and possibly hurt by this show of indifference, ceased firing, and some of them came to watch Saint-Cyr's men march past, as if on parade, in a sort of tacit truce. Desaix came up in time, when the necessary fighting was done, but one wonders what would have happened with a more stolid foe than the troops of Condé.² The incident makes one wish that Saint-Cyr had been in the place of Ney when that boiling warrior at Bautzen in 1813, stung by the fire of the enemy's guns on his flank, turned from the path of victory to deal with his more immediate, but less important, foes.

While Moreau was thus groping round Ingolstadt, the situation was being effectively cleared up for him by events on the Lahn, where we left the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' on the 10th September awaiting attack. The Archduke, always thinking, one suspects, a great deal about Moreau, came up much more slowly than one would have expected a scientific Prince to move, who wanted to crush one army before turning on the other; and it was not till the 14th September that he reached Weilmünster.³ Jourdan, who had already been twice turned by his left on the Lahn, was naturally anxious about that flank, where Grenier was opposite Giessen, and Lefebvre opposite Wetzlar. Before the Archduke arrived the left wing was pressed, and Ney, commanding Grenier's advanced guard on the left bank, was driven across the river, his infantry taking refuge in Giessen. The

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 259-64; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 61; Archduke Charles, iii. 196-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas viii; Vogel, xxiii, xxiv, xxvi, xxvii.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 262-3.

³ South-west of Wetzlar, Vogel, xviii.

inhabitants opened the gates, and these men were taken prisoners, but Grenier obtained their release by a threat, which smacks of Ney, to burn the town by using his guns from the right bank.¹ Although Jourdan had massed so many troops on his left that he led the Prince to believe he meant to advance from that flank, the distribution of his army was good enough, for the Lahn was not easy to cross.² Unfortunately Lefebvre reported³ that he believed he would be attacked in force, and at the same time Marceau, assisted by Bernadotte and Bonnaud's cavalry reserve, had repulsed an attack on the right and had thrown the Austrians well back on Kirberg. These two circumstances caused Jourdan to disregard all warnings he received that the Archduke was in front of the right, and to persist in his belief that the attack would be on his left. He therefore strengthened that flank at the expense of the right, Bernadotte, for instance, being moved up the river from Limburg to Weilburg, and Bonnaud's cavalry being sent north of Wetzlar.⁴

On the 16th September 1796 the Archduke advanced, while, to call Jourdan's attention to the Upper Lahn, Kray attacked the French left vigorously, crossing to the left bank and throwing himself on Grenier. Jourdan, prepared for this, was soon on the ground, and, calling up Bonnaud's cavalry reserve and part of Lefebvre's division, beat back the enemy into Giessen. He now discovered that the Austrian forces here were not so large as he had believed, and consequently realized his mistake in having weakened his right. Bonnaud, in making a successful charge, had had his thigh broken by a shot and died at Bonn on the 30th March 1797. He had commanded only a small body, but he seems to have been the most satisfactory cavalry General that Jourdan ever had. He had been a surgeon before he enlisted as a Dragoon in 1776, and had won his way up from the ranks.⁵

¹ Jourdan, 188-9.

² For detailed position of army see Jourdan, 191-6; *Vict. et Conq.*, corrected for post of Castelvred by Maze, 363.

³ Lefebvre was commanding temporarily his own division with that of Grenier and Championnet. His dispatches do not seem at all pressing for reinforcements, see Jourdan, 341-3.

⁴ It is well to remember that the towns of Giessen, Wetzlar, Weilburg, Runkel, Limburg, and Diez are on the left or east bank of the Lahn.

⁵ Jourdan, 194-5; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 41; Michaud, lviii. 558-9.

While Kray called Jourdan's attention off to his left, the Archduke delivered his real attack on the right, where Marceau commanded Poncet's division holding Limburg and Diez, and that of Castilverd lining the lower part of the Lahn. The brunt of the attack fell on Poncet, and, after a severe combat lasting from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m., Marceau still held Limburg, but the enemy had gained Diez and thus had a point where they could cross the Lahn. Had not Jourdan altered the first disposition of his troops, Bernadotte and Bonnaud would have been close on Marceau's left, and, as Jourdan himself says, could have at once supported him. All, however, was not lost: Marceau, well acquainted with the country and, as we have seen, not a very sanguine man, believed he could retake the lost ground with four battalions and eight squadrons. Bernadotte, who had reinforced him on the 14th, had already sent him a regiment, and Jourdan was hurrying both Bernadotte and the cavalry reserve to his aid. The Archduke himself, although ready to attack Limburg again next day, acknowledges his plan was rash; the passage by Diez and the *débouché* from it were difficult; Marceau, he thought, even with his own troops could have retaken the position at daybreak, and the numerical superiority of the Austrians was not sufficient to make it safe to purchase the position by the sacrifice of many men.¹ Had the Archduke failed to drive Jourdan from the Lahn, his position would have been most awkward, for, having advanced so far north in pursuit of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', he would have been held by that army, when even the sluggish Moreau must have done something in the south.²

The French position, however, was lost by an extraordinary event. Marceau had prudently arranged that in case of defeat the division of the 'Nord' under Castilverd was to retreat on Montabaur and then on the bridge-head at Neuwied, but he ordered Castilverd to 'defend the two *débouchés* with the utmost obstinacy, and you will not dream of retreating until after being completely driven in, or after having received an order to do so'.³ The meaning of this is clear, and certainly one would

¹ Archduke Charles, iii. 166-7.

² For the struggle on the Lahn see Jourdan, 183-201, 341-5; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 37-43; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 75-7, 102-11; Archduke Charles, iii. 151-70; Vogel, xvii, xviii; Baedeker's *Rhine*, p. 189, for course of the Lahn.

³ Parfait, 232.

never have imagined that Castilverd would retire without being pressed or having received any order to move. However, at ten at night on the 16th September, while Marceau was promising Jourdan to hold to the last extremity, Castilverd was writing to Marceau, apparently in answer to a letter telling him not to leave his position until Bonnet, on his right, informed him that the retreat had begun. Castilverd stated that Adjutant-General Becker informed him that the position of Diez had been forced by the enemy. He knew that the French still occupied the heights in rear of Diez, covering the road to Montabaur in rear, and the road down the Lahn to Holzappel,¹ that is, the two roads whose possession made him safe; but that did not content him. 'It is thus clear that the *débouché* by Limburg is forced. I do not hesitate therefore to order the retreat.' And off he and his division went for Montabaur, and thence to Neuwied: whatever might happen to the army, he was safe.²

The situation was even now not irremediable, and Marceau ordered Castilverd back. With Bernadotte and the cavalry reserve he would have had double the force with which he had resisted on the day before. Unfortunately he despaired, and at 9 a.m. on the 17th September, believing that the enemy had been reinforced, and that he himself would not be able to hold long enough to get Castilverd back in his position, he took advantage of a fog to retire on Malzberg.³ So unnecessary was this withdrawal that the Archduke was not even aware of it for some time. The messenger sent to inform Bernadotte must have gone astray, for that General, hurrying up with the leading troops of his division, first learnt of the retreat by coming on the columns of the advancing enemy; another proof that Marceau might have held till relieved. Bernadotte disputed the ground as long as possible, to give time to the left to retire, and it was only at noon that he fell back on Merenberg,⁴ where the rest of his division and the cavalry reserve joined him. Again he was attacked, but, acting well and loyally towards the endangered left wing, he held his ground till night.⁵

This incident is worth giving in detail, as it shows the acci-

¹ Between Diez and Nassau.

² Maze, 370-1 and note; Jourdan, 345-6.

³ North of Diez, Maze, 368 note 2. Not shown in Vogel.

⁴ North-west of Weilburg.

⁵ Bernadotte in Jourdan, 347-9.

dents which may ruin the plans of any commander. Doubtless it could not have occurred with any General accustomed to serve with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and it is noteworthy that the one reinforcement which Jourdan received and used from the 'Nord' ruined his chance of holding on the right bank of the Rhine, and so ending the campaign not ingloriously. Castelvèrd must have been a very unsatisfactory officer. Obviously he had come up the river unwillingly, cowed by the idea of joining an army that had made a long retreat, lingering on the way as long as he could, and professing to believe a monstrous canard that behind him the Austrians were opposite Cologne, and were marching down on Düsseldorf.¹ When questioned by Macdonald as to his reason for retiring without being forced to do so and without giving proper warning to Marceau, 'Ah, bah', he replied, 'the b . . . ! They would like to throw the blame for their defeat on the Armée du Nord, but they wanted nothing better than a pretext for getting off, and, since they have made a retreat of eight leagues, I have quite well made one of ten. Let them go and be b . . . !'² One would like the tough Lefebvre or the fiery Ney to have heard this : it is one of many proofs of the ill-feeling that existed between the different French armies.

This irruption of the Austrians by Limburg gravely compromised the left of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which could only reform on the Wied, behind Altenkirchen, much nearer to the enemy than to them, but once again the fruit of a manœuvre on which the skilful young Prince congratulated himself was lost either by his own slowness or by the endurance of the French. Whilst Marceau and Bernadotte, fighting well, formed a screen, and Castelvèrd on the 17th September occupied Neuwied, which Jourdan, more provident than Moreau, had had well fortified, the rest of the army marched north-west from Wetzlar up the Dill for Herborn, and thence westwards by Hachenburg for Altenkirchen. Bernadotte with the cavalry reserve arrived first and, passing through the ravine leading to the town, formed up as the first line, followed by the rest of the left wing. The division of Poncet, led by Marceau, was that most in danger, for it was followed foot by foot by the enemy: it had but little ammunition, its cavalry was far inferior to that pursuing it, and all the 18th it had either been skirmishing or

¹ See his dispatches, Jourdan, 337-41.

² Macdonald, 46.

stoutly resisting at Freilingen. Slow as the retreat of Marceau had been, the other divisions had not passed the ravine by the time he drew near on the 19th September, and Jourdan warned him that, though he would be supported, it was indispensable that he should halt and hold his ground till further orders. This was done, and the enemy was kept back until Jourdan himself led back the division, which took post on the right of Bernadotte.¹

Marceau no longer rode at the head of his men, for, just before the retreat ended, that gallant young General whilst reconnoitring had been shot by a Tyrolean skirmisher. His grenadiers carried him off, at first on two muskets, and then on a ladder, between the columns of the divisions of Poncet and of Bernadotte. He was loved by the men, and his bearers refused to permit others to relieve them of the precious burden. At Altenkirchen the litter was met by the sorrowing Jourdan and other Generals, when, as we have seen, the Commander-in-Chief himself took charge of the rear-guard. The army had to retire still farther and, as Marceau was too ill to be removed, the neutral Prussian garrison which held the town received the wounded General. Small need had Jourdan to recommend him and his attendants to the advancing enemy, for nothing could be more honourable than the conduct of the Austrians. Haddick, who led the pursuit, and other Generals visited the sufferer; the Archduke sent his surgeons to attend him; Kray came to his bedside and remained there for some time, in sorrow for a gallant opponent. In these long campaigns the opposing forces learnt to know one another well: the Hussars of Barco and of Blankenstein had often met Marceau in the field, and their officers now made their appearance by the side of the man who was never again to receive or to anticipate their charge.²

At three in the morning of the 21st September 1796 he woke from a swoon, and recognized the Austrian General Elsnitz, who sat by his side: soon afterwards he passed away, the portrait of the girl Agathe Leprêtre de Chateaugiron, whom he was about to marry, hanging from his neck. An Austrian escort, accompanied by Kray himself, followed his body to Neuwied,

¹ Jourdan, 199-204; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii, 111-14; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 42-4; Archduke Charles, iii. 170-5; Vogel, xvii, xviii.

² Maze, 88-92, 391-6; Parfait, 240-7; Lahure (114-15) saw him fall from his horse.

where it was handed over to his comrades, and the Archduke asked to be informed of the hour of his funeral, which took place on the 23rd September, the grave being in the entrenched camp of Coblenz, which he had formed. As his body was laid in the grave, the volleys of his comrades were answered from the opposite bank of the Rhine by the hoarse voices of the guns whose anger he had so often faced, but which now thundered the regrets of a chivalrous enemy.¹ He was only twenty-seven, 'young in years, but old in glory'. After the wail of French and Austrians had died away, Byron's noble music sounded round his tomb :

'Brief, brave and glorious was his young career,
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes,
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose.'²

With the foolish fondness inherent in mankind, which causes the death of those they love or admire to come on each fading generation as a fresh surprise, as if they had expected for their friends an immortality they themselves did not hope for, Jourdan had shed tears as he met the wounded General borne from the field, and had left him in Altenkirchen with fresh grief. The Archduke had arrived soon after Marceau had died, and had sat by the bedside for some time in silence before this proof of whither the paths of glory led.³ In later years both these commanders may have envied the fate of the warm-hearted, impulsive, gallant lad who did not live to know, as they learnt to do, the ingratitude of Courts and of Nations. Marceau died at an age when men dare all for Fame; and History, Poetry, Painting, and Sculpture, have given him as proud a record as if he had lived to bear all the decorations and wealth of a Marshal of the Empire.

The whole army except Castilverd's division was now safely concentrated behind the Wied and both commanders⁴ are agreed that a blow might have been dealt by the French with advantage, although the Austrians, having Mayence to draw on, should have been superior in numbers. Jourdan was in want

¹ Maze, 92-3 ; Parfait, 247-52.

² *Childe Harold*, Canto 3, lvii.

³ Parfait, 248-50 ; Maze, 93.

⁴ Jourdan, 207 ; Archduke Charles, iii. 175.

of ammunition, while the country was too bare of supplies for men, and especially for the horses, to enable him to await his convoys. In its advance the army had refilled its ammunition trains from the magazines of the fortresses captured, but during its retreat this source had failed, and, as we have seen, no ammunition could be drawn from Würzburg. In reality he must also have been influenced by other reasons. Requested by the Directory to retain his charge until his successor arrived, he had wished to hold his position on the Lahn and to hand over the army there. He had failed in this, while the death of Marceau, and the weakness or want of confidence shown by Castelperd, probably further shook his trust in his hold over the army. He could hardly remove Castelperd, as that General's proper commander, Beurnonville, was to be his successor. Mayence was now open and the enemy thus had a gate on the left bank. All things considered, he determined on further retreat. On the 20th September Championnet and Grenier moved westwards and passed the Sieg and the Lower Agger. The cavalry followed them. Poncet crossed the Rhine at Bonn and encamped in rear of that town. Lefebvre and Bernadotte, having covered the retreat, took post in front of Uckerath; Lefebvre with his left on the Sieg, Bernadotte on his right. Next day the retreat was continued and the army took post in front of Cologne. Bernadotte and Championnet were at Portz on the Rhine, above the town; the line ran thence north-east; Grenier was at Rath and Lefebvre at Bensberg. Poncet burnt his bridge at Bonn. Castelperd remained on the right bank in the entrenched camp at Neuwied. The Archduke had halted his main body at Uckerath, and in a few days he turned southward and marched up the Rhine with 16,000 men to join the force in front of Moreau. He left from 32,000 to 36,000 men on the Sieg and on the Main to watch Jourdan, besides 9,000 in Mayence and Mannheim.¹ On the 22nd September Jourdan, having handed over his command to Beurnonville, left the army he had commanded for so long, and had carried from Charleroi to the frontiers of Bohemia.

¹ Archduke Charles, iii. 213-33.

XVI

THE RETREAT OF MOREAU

(September 1796 to February 1797)

Battle of Biberach. Choice of routes. The Archduke returns. Battle of the Elz. Sieges of Kehl and Huningue. Criticism of the commanders.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

15th-17th November. Victory of Bonaparte at Arcola.

17th November. Death of the Empress Catherine of Russia.

15th December-1st January. French expedition to Bantry Bay.

WE now come to the celebrated retreat of Moreau, which has been so praised by his admirers. For all practical purposes the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had now ceased to count in the campaign, and in consequence the situation of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had become very precarious. The army, 64,000 strong,¹ had in its immediate front Latour with 16,960 men under his direct orders, besides 10,906 under Frolich on the Upper Iller and in the Tyrol. Nauendorf was marching up the left bank of the Danube with 5,815 men to occupy Ulm in rear of Moreau. Far in rear of the army Petrasch had 5,564 men scattered from the Neckar to the Rhine, whilst the defeat of Jourdan was setting free the Austrian garrisons on the Rhine, some 13,334 strong.² Moreau had already sent a small body, 2,000 men, back to reinforce the garrison of Kehl, the *tête-de-pont* of Strasbourg, on the right bank of the Rhine,³ but before this body could arrive, the enemy had given him good cause for anxiety for his base. A force sent up the river by the Archduke, reinforced from Mannheim and Philippsburg, had driven back Scherb, who was observing Philippsburg, on Kehl, and had actually taken Kehl itself on the 18th September. Then the troops, instead of burning the bridge, fell to plundering, and the French retook the place.⁴ Petrasch, after

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii, Table 116.

² Ehrenbreitstein 2,632; Mayence 6,476; Mannheim 2,267; Philippsburg 1,959. Archduke Charles, iii, 213.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii, 249, 273; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix, 61-4; Archduke Charles, iii, 188, 212.

⁴ Archduke Charles, iii, 184-8; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii, 267-9; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix, 61-4; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii, 97-101.

this failure, occupied Stuttgart and marched on the Kniebis to close the road by Freudenstadt and the hills. The communication with France was thus cut, and the whole country broke into a flame of insurrection against the French.¹ The hostility now exhibited by the inhabitants had serious consequences for the army, for no supplies were received from France, the wounded had to be carried with it, and the only ammunition it could obtain was that actually with its parks.²

Meanwhile the Archduke had been set free to march up the right bank of the Rhine, to join Petrasch, and to block Moreau's retreat. Thus the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', cut off from its base and menaced by the concentration of a larger force in its rear, had to retreat before an enemy strong enough to damage any exposed portion of it and to press on its rear when engaged in the Black Forest, the defiles of which the Austrians were closing.

On the other hand the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had some advantages. It was under one commander, whilst the troops it had first to deal with were under two Generals, Nauendorf, the wiser head of the two, but having the smallest force, and Latour, who had not yet been fully taught caution, and who might be tempted to let himself be maimed before the retreat was too pronounced. Also the Archduke, fine General though he might be, had not the resolution or the nerve required for the full success of his plans. The game was now in his hands if he could throw his whole weight on Moreau, but it was not in his nature to do this. Just as, in starting against Jourdan in August, he had left a force unnecessarily strong before Moreau, and had consequently failed to take with him enough men to crush Jourdan, so now he left too large a force (32,000) to watch the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. He brought only 16,000 men to reinforce Petrasch and the bodies in rear of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' before throwing himself in the path of an army, retiring, it is true, but unbroken and hitherto victorious. Even this 16,000 he scattered, leaving a detachment in the Rheingau and another at Mannheim for the sake of what he himself calls wretched excursions on the left bank of the Rhine, so that he arrived on the Rench with only 8,500 men. It is the same fault that we have seen when he could not hear

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 273; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 101; Archduke Charles, iii. 188, 214.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 266, 276-8.

of the check to Latour at Friedberg without sending back reinforcements. He acknowledges his mistakes, but all this shows excellently how easy it is to plan a stroke on the important point, and how difficult it is to withstand the wish to be strong on the comparatively unimportant points.¹

On the 19th September 1796 Moreau began his retreat, and crossed first the Lech and then the Iller. On the 24th, while Ferino was still far south near Memmingen, Saint-Cyr was on the Lower Iller, and Desaix was sent across the Danube through Ulm to the right bank of the Blau river. Moreau had been anxious about Ulm, as Nauendorf was marching up the left bank and another Austrian force under Baillet was coming up the right bank to seize it. He had already sent on Montrichard to hold the town, but when Desaix arrived, Nauendorf was on the heights in rear, and his guns, and apparently those of Baillet, opened on the French as they crossed, and threw the troops into some confusion. In the end Desaix took post, as I have said, on the right bank of the Blau, Nauendorf on the heights above Ulm, and Baillet on the right bank by Pfühl. Here Moreau waited, expecting that the enemy would deliver battle, but a reconnaissance sent out from Ulm showed there was no chance of this, and on the 27th September he withdrew to the south-west, till on the 29th he was behind the Feder-See. Desaix, who had marched up the left bank of the Danube to cross at Ehingen, was now between the Danube and the Feder-See; Saint-Cyr to the south of the lake; and Ferino far south, stretching from Waldsee to Lake Constance.² As for Oudinot, after Geisenberg he had gone to Neuburg to recover; then he rejoined Delmas's former division, now under Sainte-Suzanne, where he again had a brigade, and was sent to the rear to guard the communications.³

This march of Moreau from the Lech to the Danube, his partial passage of the Danube, and then his withdrawal southwards, is very strange and requires explanation. Did he intend to cross in force and to march on the Neckar, the most obvious

¹ Archduke Charles, iii. 233-4; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 328-9.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 270-6; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 61-5; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 119-20; Archduke Charles, iii. 203-14; Maps, Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas viii, xiii; Vogel, xxvi.

³ Nollet, 15. I cannot understand Oudinot's movements unless he was sent right back to the Rhine valley to Emdingen, north-west of Freiburg, Vogel, xxv.

course, and the one in accordance with the intentions of the Government?¹ And did Nauendorf's resistance prevent this, as the Archduke believed?² The movement is passed over lightly by the French writers. Saint-Cyr, referring to the report that Moreau had had such an intention, says he knew nothing about it, but could assert that, if this had been his design on arrival at Ulm, Nauendorf could not have hindered his carrying it out.³ The extension of his right wing may once again have stopped Moreau, but he himself stated that his motive in retreating on the right bank of the Danube was his fear of losing the support of the Lake of Constance for his right.⁴ It is difficult to understand this, for it was his left which was in danger, and now, as during almost the whole of the campaign, his right wing was useless to him.

At night on the 30th September⁵ Moreau, Desaix, and Saint-Cyr met in consultation. The enemy in front of them had separated, though, as soon as Desaix had withdrawn from Ulm, Nauendorf had had the opportunity of joining Latour, and of thus assembling 40,000 men, including Petrasch's force, with which to defend the Kinzig valley against Moreau. Instead, he had marched eastwards with his 9,500 men for Tübingen on the Neckar, while Latour clung to the right bank of the Danube. Nauendorf was carrying out the wishes of the Archduke, but the Prince blames him for not giving way to the importunities of Latour and for not staying with him when he saw that he was determined to remain, and would be in danger of being crushed. The best plan, the concentration on the left and rear of Moreau, could not be carried out, and it was better not to weaken Latour. Not that Latour thought he required much support. He believed that Moreau was in full retreat, and, intoxicated by the pleasure of following him, dreamt of throwing the French into the Lake of Constance and of not letting a man escape.⁶ Already that day, believing that the French were off, he had made a sudden and

¹ The Directory had ordered him to march towards Würzburg, Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 270.

² Archduke Charles, iii. 209-11.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 275.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁵ I think Saint-Cyr, iii. 282-3, must mean this date, for, though he says the battle was fixed for the 'lendemain', that obviously would have been too soon to get up Ferino, for whom Moreau waited.

⁶ Archduke Charles, iii. 214-17.

violent attack, but Lecourbe, sent on by Saint-Cyr with his brigade, had 'engaged the enemy with his habitual vigour'. Thinking only of advance, Latour had got himself into an awkward position, for behind him was the Riss river, which ran in a defile, part of its course being through swamps, and any retreat for the mass of his force must be through Biberach.¹

The battle of Biberach, which took place on the 2nd October, stripped of details uninteresting to us, was a very simple affair, and was fought not so much on Moreau's plan as by arrangement between his two lieutenants, Desaix and Saint-Cyr. Taking the forces actually brought on the field, the French, some 39,000 strong,² were far superior to the Austrians, who were only about 26,000.³ Behind Latour's position were bad defiles and his wings were far apart. On the right Ferino was intended to come upon the left and rear of the enemy, but on the 30th September his left had been pushed out far south to Ravensburg, and he was not brought up in time. Saint-Cyr, with the centre and the reserve, was to attack the main body of the enemy by the right or south of the Feder-See; Desaix was to attack farther north, and the Austrians were to be driven back on Biberach.⁴

Saint-Cyr intended first to crush the enemy in the plain before him and then to turn on their left, the corps of Condé and of Mercantin. Already annoyed by being ordered to make three attacks and to lend support to Desaix, who had but a comparatively small part of the Austrians before him, Saint-Cyr also met with a curious contretemps. Colonel Mainoni was sent with a battalion to remain masked near one of the enemy's batteries, and then to turn the Austrians' right and attack the battery, when the general advance took place. Mainoni started, but, laying too much stress on the masking, he and his men disappeared and could not be found till the battle was almost over. However, at the moment which Saint-Cyr and Desaix had fixed (for they took such matters much into their own hands), Saint-Cyr advanced in a truly Napoleonic way, throwing forward twenty-four guns and moving under cover of their fire. Mainoni, who should have played the winning card against a large battery

¹ Saint-Cyr, iii. 278-85, 446-8; Archduke Charles, iii. 210-11; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 67-8.

² *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 125.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 219.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 286-8, 448-9.

that was shelling the French centre, made no sign, but the men were in fighting spirits; the grenadiers asked Saint-Cyr if the guns were for booty; and the force, covered always by its artillery fire, went on, capturing the battery and driving the enemy on the heights of Grod or Groth back to the centre of their position. This advance was led by Lecourbe, the audacity of whose column, says Saint-Cyr, had terrified the Austrians.¹ Lecourbe himself received a ball in his chest, but was saved by the double leather of his belt.²

As Saint-Cyr was pressing his advantage over the centre, and so cutting off the left of the enemy, message after message came from Laboissière, whose brigade had been left to amuse Mercantin and Condé till Saint-Cyr could turn on them, after crushing the centre. Now Laboissière wailed that he was being driven back and, although Saint-Cyr tried to induce him to stand for the necessary time, he declared he must retire. Most unwisely Saint-Cyr turned back to his rescue, and found it was but a false alarm, for Mercantin, seeing the defeat of the centre, was about to retire and was only, according to the laudable Austrian practice, prefacing his withdrawal by a false attack; Saint-Cyr with some cavalry followed Mercantin and Condé to the Riss, and for some way up the valley of the river there was a race between Condé on the right bank and Saint-Cyr on the left for the Schweinhausen bridge. Saint-Cyr got so close up that his men heard the cry, 'Let the equipages of the Prince de Condé pass,' but he had no guns or infantry with him, and the *émigrés* held the bridge stoutly, setting fire to a mill on the French side, which made it difficult to get near the passage. Indeed, the *émigrés* asserted that they had saved the Austrian army, and they certainly had done a good deal towards it.

Saint-Cyr now rejoined the mass of his troops in order to attack the centre of the enemy at Groth, but by this time even the foolhardy Latour had seen the necessity for retreat, and had already sent off his artillery park to join Nauendorf in the north.³ The ascent which Saint-Cyr's men had to climb was steep, and the enemy's artillery dominated that of the French,

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 290-3.

² The belt of the Commanders-in-Chief was tri-coloured with gold fringe; Generals of Division, red; Generals of Brigade, blue. The A.D.C. had a brassard of the same colour as the belt of their Generals. Philebert, 160.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 227.

but the bayonet settled the affair. As the Austrians were being driven back on Biberach, they were disheartened by the sound of firing behind them. Desaix, having waited till he knew Saint-Cyr was successful in his first attack, had advanced, and had driven back the enemy's right on to the Galgenberg, where they stood. Then Desaix, unable to succeed by direct assault, had turned both flanks so that the enemy had to retire between two of his columns, making their way through with the loss of five complete battalions. Desaix had followed them on and into Biberach, and now the other mass, retiring before Saint-Cyr, came on the town. Some of the Austrians cut a way through Desaix, but others threw themselves into the woods to the right and left, so that Saint-Cyr's men arrived pell-mell with their enemy in the town. Many of the Austrian regiments that had been cut off were heard all night moving in the woods and occasionally firing at one another: even the *émigrés* received a volley. Most of these men eventually got across the river by difficult passages, and nightfall prevented effectual pursuit, but two colours, 4,000 or 5,000 prisoners, and eighteen guns were taken. Had Ferino come up, Latour's army must have been destroyed.¹

How after this battle the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', clear for a time from all pressure on its rear, got through the Black Forest and crossed the Rhine is told in detail by Saint-Cyr and the Archduke, but for us the operation is of interest only as showing the character of the Generals engaged. Undecided as usual, Moreau let day after day pass before he made any definite movement, and that too when time was precious, for it was certain that the Archduke, once he had driven the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' far enough back, would come south to join Latour, Nauendorf, and Petrasch. At last on the 4th October the left wing was sent across to the left bank of the Danube at Riedlingen, and the army fell back on both banks. Saint-Cyr now passed by Ostrach and Stockach, places he was to see again in 1799 under Jourdan: on the 9th October he was astride of the Danube at Möhringen, and Ferino carried on the line to Lake Constance. Moreau had at first

¹ Archduke Charles, 218-30; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 286-309; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 67-72; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 122-8; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 111-12; Bittard des Portes, 302-6; De Rison, iii. 101-7; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas xiii; Jomini, *Rév.*, Atlas xvii.

meant to throw himself on Nauendorf, but now, abandoning that plan, he determined to reach the Rhine and Kehl by the Kinzig valley: Desaix therefore marched from Tuttlingen north-west on Villingen. Meeting the posts of Petrasch, he drove them from Villingen, but, to the discomfiture of Moreau, he considered himself not strong enough to push on into the Kinzig valley, for the head of the valley was still held by Petrasch, supported on his left by Nauendorf, who had retaken Rottweil from Desaix.¹

In Desaix's first advance in this direction there had been an affair at Endingen, where Oudinot, whether or not he had been left for dead at Neuburg on the 14th September, was now on the 5th October once more on horseback: although he still had his arm in a sling, he led a charge of three cavalry regiments, taking prisoner a battalion and many mounted men.²

Desaix's unwillingness to force the Kinzig pass caused Moreau to confer with Desaix, Saint-Cyr, and Reynier at Donaueschingen³ on the 9th October. Saint-Cyr's plan would have been to strike immediately after Biberach, first at Nauendorf, next at Petrasch, and then to meet the Archduke as he came up the Rhine, but, as I have said, Moreau was always more puzzled the day after a battle than the day before, and he had done nothing. At that time Petrasch was at Schweningen, and Nauendorf at Hechingen.⁴ Between them they had some 16,309 men,⁵ but these were scattered over a number of posts, whilst the Archduke was on the Murg, far down the Rhine.⁶ If Saint-Cyr's criticisms on Moreau sometimes seem hard, here he agrees with the Archduke's view of what an enterprising General, knowing the real state of affairs, would have done.⁷ Still, if Moreau thought the army must go to Kehl, nothing could be done except to force the Kinzig and enter the Rhine

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 308-14; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 72-3; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 129; Archduke Charles, iii. 231-337; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas viii; Vogel, xxv, xxvi.

² Curély, 112-13; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 311-12. I think that Nollet, 14, really refers to this affair, which he dates as the 1st November. I read Endingen for Ettenheim in Curély.

³ South of Villingen, Vogel, xxv.

⁴ The Archduke, iii. 235, says Echingen, but I think it should be Hechingen. See Vogel, xxvi.

⁵ I follow Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii, Table 118, but, as will be seen a few lines farther on, they could not concentrate that number.

⁶ Running by Rastatt, some 29 miles below Strasbourg.

⁷ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 308; Archduke Charles, iii. 232-3.

valley by Offenbourg before the Archduke could arrive. So thought Saint-Cyr, and he was right, for the Archduke, saying that Nauendorf and Petrasch could at best assemble 12,000 men (and Saint-Cyr would not have given time for that), acknowledges that this force would not have been sufficient to stop the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.¹

As Moreau had chosen the Kinzig for his route, he and Reynier agreed with Saint-Cyr on that point, but Desaix differed. He declared that, if Nauendorf and Petrasch had not already joined, they could do so next day, when he would find at least all Petrasch's troops in the fine position of Benz-Ebene, with Nauendorf on his right flank. Then, if he did succeed in forcing the passage, he would come on the Archduke, who would prevent him from debouching into the Rhine valley, and thus his wing would be exposed to certain destruction. Moreau and Reynier were shaken by this gloomy picture, but Saint-Cyr replied that he did not believe in the junction, and that if it were made, the French could still crush any resistance, for both the Austrian Generals had to guard a number of passes to the Neckar as well as to the Rhine, and so could not be strong anywhere. The Kinzig valley, as the Archduke agrees, was the best, because the widest, route.² As for the Archduke, Saint-Cyr believed rightly that the Prince for the third time would make the mistake of leaving too large a retarding force behind him, and would bring only a small detachment with him, while the fact that the Prince was making a diversion on the left bank showed that he wished to frighten the army back rather than to fight it. Saint-Cyr even offered to lend Desaix one division, Taponier, a great concession for a wing commander.³

Moreau, to do him justice, saw the advantages of the Kinzig route, but he did not like to use his authority to overcome the repugnance of Desaix, nor did he like to place the movement under Saint-Cyr, making the centre lead the left in a march to the left.⁴ Then Desaix, and presumably Reynier, tried to persuade him to move by a long route, the Villes Forestières,⁵ down

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 314-16; Archduke Charles, iii. 216.

² Archduke Charles, iii. 232.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 314-20.

⁴ In advancing from the Rhine Saint-Cyr had led Desaix, as the movement was to the right.

⁵ Waldshut, Laufenburg, Säckingen, Rheinfelden, Ensisheim.

the Rhine from Waldshut to Huningue, the route by which he had already sent his trains, escorted by the brigades of Tharreau and Paillard from the right wing. Those that believe in the possibility of a neutrality unsupported by the presence of an armed force should read the instructions which the Directory was now sending to Moreau, in case he took some such route, to demand a passage through Switzerland and to force one if refused.¹ Saint-Cyr, however, declared the plan to be too ridiculous, for not only did it involve turning again to Latour and throwing him back beyond Stockach, but also the long detour would enable the Archduke to concentrate his forces and to march up the Rhine on Huningue. If the Kinzig route were not to be taken, then he suggested the next best, the Val d'Enfer or Höllenthal, leading to Freiburg in the Rhine valley, and so to Alt-Breisach. This was inferior to the Kinzig as a route, for an army could only move through its narrow defile in one column, yet, once the highest point were reached, any force debouching from the Rhine valley would be dominated.² The pass was little known, and was dreaded, but all difficulties disappeared when Saint-Cyr undertook to lead the way through.³

On the 10th October the leading troops of Saint-Cyr took Neustadt and next day forced the Höllenthal, reaching Zarten with great ease, for Petrasch's corps was too greatly disseminated. On the 12th October the advanced-guard passed through Freiburg and, turning northwards along the foot of the hills, took post near Waldkirch, the regulation of the march being praised by the Archduke. Saint-Cyr was now out of the hills, and Captain Préval, with some light cavalry, was pushed across the valley to Alt-Breisach, where he found two companies of French troops from the other bank.⁴ These had been kept so much on the alert by the Austrians that, the moment they saw the party approaching, they scrambled into their boats and were about to fire, when some of their stragglers assured them that it was really part of their own army, which, instead of being in Germany, was close at hand. Préval wisely took on himself to

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 320 note, 459.

² Archduke Charles, iii. 231-2.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 320-5.

⁴ Alt-Breisach is on the right and Neu-Breisach on the left bank of the Rhine. Saint-Cyr, *Atlas* viii; Vogel, xxv; Jomini, *Rév.*, *Atlas* xviii.

order in Moreau's name the commanders of Neu-Breisach on the left bank, and of Strasbourg, to occupy Alt-Breisach on the right bank in force, and to assist the debouching of the army by offensive demonstrations.¹

From this moment the army, with its entry into the Rhine valley assured, was in full communication with France, and the main dangers and difficulties of the retreat were, or should have been, passed.² Never, says the Archduke, was there a situation with more advantages than that in which Moreau found himself on his arrival at Freiburg, for then but four battalions and four squadrons (say 3,720 men) were in front of him. Even on the 15th there were only about 16,720.³

Although the army could now have passed the Rhine at Breisach, Moreau wished to do so lower down by Kehl and Strasbourg; yet he wasted day after day, when every moment was precious to him if he were to forestall the Archduke before the latter could concentrate in front of the army in the Rhine valley. Instead of letting Saint-Cyr continue to lead the army, he waited to bring up the left into its proper place in front. Next on the 13th October he went off to Strasbourg, not merely to learn the movements of the Archduke, as Saint-Cyr rather unfairly says, but also to see the state of the fortifications at Kehl,⁴ two points which surely might have been left to some less important officer. At Strasbourg he met his friend and predecessor, Pichegru, who had been hanging about the left bank, hoping that the army might return so beaten that Moreau would be removed and he himself restored to command. He found Moreau embarrassed and uneasy, for, while he was collecting pontoons to cross the river, he believed that the Austrians might render the operation extremely dangerous. Moreau acknowledged that he had suffered very materially in his retreat and, according to Pichegru's report of the conversation, he foresaw the probability of his being routed on the Upper Rhine, if the Austrians followed up their advantages. Pichegru, who wished nothing better, expressed his agreement. Still, Moreau was not at all inclined to play into the hand of his

¹ Pascallet, 16-17.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 325-8; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 72-4; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 129-30; Archduke Charles, iii. 237-9.

³ Archduke Charles, iii. 245.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 331-2 note, 461; Wickham, i. 471.

treacherous friend, who found him so proud of the success he had hitherto obtained as to render it extremely dangerous for Pichegru to make any direct proposal to him, for he might probably be tempted to 'make a bad use' of it, that is to say, to inform the Directory of the plot.¹ All this was bad work for a commander, and by 4 a.m. on the 15th October Moreau was apologizing to the Directory for some confusion in his dispatch by representing that he had not been in bed for three nights.² But while he was wasting his time the Archduke was coming up the right of the Rhine to join Nauendorf and Latour in front of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.

It was only on the 17th October that, by Moreau's orders, Saint-Cyr began reconnoitring for roads by which to advance northwards down the valley. The Archduke in front was engaged in similar work in the reverse direction, for though, he says, at first he would not have been able to resist a single division, he had now finished his concentration. Petrasch had joined him by Ettenheim; Nauendorf, who with 10,000 men had hung on the northern flank of Moreau, had joined by Elzach; and Latour with his 23,000, instead of being any longer in rear of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', had also got round its northern flank by Hornberg and the Kinzig valley, and he also had joined the Archduke. Thus, whilst Moreau was waiting, the whole available force of the enemy had been collected, except Frolich, their left wing, who, having with some 13,000 men followed the French right wing (Ferino), was now also trying to join the Archduke, but was kept back in the hills by posts held by Ferino at Hohle-Graben, St. Margen, and St. Peter. A more complete reversal of the situation in a few days has seldom been seen, for what had been a weak, long-strung-out Austrian cordon was now a strong force concentrated on the important point in front of the army. It was as if Moore had let not only Napoleon from Madrid, but also Soult from the east, cut between him and Coruña. Well may Saint-Cyr say that, if the Austrian Generals made as many mistakes in this campaign as the French, they knew better how to repair their errors.³

The situation was something like that of July, when Moreau

¹ Wickham, i. 471-2.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 461.

³ Ibid., 328-33, iv. 1-9; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 74-5; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 161-2; Archduke Charles, iii. 240-53.

had first crossed the Rhine and had tried to force the Archduke down the right bank, but now Moreau had his rear (his 'cul' as Napoleon would have put it),¹ that is to say his right wing, in the mountains behind. There was also another important difference. In July Moreau had had a strong force, Saint-Cyr's corps, in the mountains on the right of his fighting front, whilst the Archduke's main strength was in the plain by the river; and, though the Austrians had had the advantage in the plain, their discomfiture in the hills had forced them to retreat. Now, to the mortification of Saint-Cyr, the mountains were weakly held by the French, whilst the Archduke had learnt by experience to throw a larger force there. Also Moreau, halting on the Elz river, had a division of each corps on the right bank, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Saint-Cyr. It was in this position that, when about to advance, he was attacked by the Archduke on the 19th October.

In the battle² that ensued Moreau used some 38,000 men, if we omit the right wing, which was engaged in the mountains. The Archduke says that he himself had, without Frolich, 24,000, but Moreau was under the belief that he was fighting a force stronger by 10,000 men than it really was. Jomini seems to have thought that the intention of the French commander was that Saint-Cyr should sweep down on the enemy in the plain, but in reality Moreau was anxious about his right, which had been attacked and on the 18th had lost some posts. He therefore ordered Saint-Cyr to send a detachment to support the right wing, and with this aid Ferino recovered his posts. Meanwhile Saint-Cyr's division on the left bank of the Elz river was driven back across the river, and Waldkirch was occupied by the enemy. Nauendorf was now pressing Saint-Cyr's right, but Lecourbe, returning from lending assistance to Ferino, was able to turn the Austrian left at this point. Desaix's division (Beaupuis) on the left bank had been no happier than Saint-Cyr's: Decaen, who commanded its advanced-guard, was injured by the fall of his horse, and Beaupuis took his place, saying, 'To-

¹ Napoleon once staggered an A.D.C. of Soult's by asking if the Marshal had brought up his 'cul' with him, meaning the rear of his corps: *Saint-Chamans*, 39.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 4-29 and Atlas viii; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 77-80; Archduke Charles, iii. 243-61; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 114; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 161-8 and Map, p. 163; Vogel, xxv.

day, comrade, it is for me to act as General of the advanced-guard ; stay you with the division !' Soon he himself fell dead. 'Let us save the division, we will weep for him afterwards !' exclaimed Desaix, but he was thrown over the Elz with heavy loss. The Austrians could certainly claim the victory, but their very success had forced Moreau to concentrate his army, and the Archduke's criticisms of the French commander are balanced by Saint-Cyr's explanations of what the Austrians should have done in order to gain a complete victory !

Next day, the 20th October, the Archduke again attacked, but gained no real advantage. That night, however, Moreau, relinquishing all hope of advancing down the right bank, sent Desaix and the left wing (which General Oudinot had now rejoined) across the Rhine at Alt-Breisach in such scuttling haste that an ammunition park was forgotten, and nearly half the bridge of boats was lost. Vandamme fought a rear-guard action to cover the retreat. It is very difficult to understand this movement, even when we remember that Moreau was fond of splitting up his army. He himself told the Directory that the state of misery in which his men fought, without clothes or shoes, made him abandon the idea of remaining on the right bank, and that he meant his left wing to march down the left bank to Strasbourg ; thence it was to be directed on Mannheim to recapture the bridge-head there, and to force the enemy to destroy the bridge, so as to secure the free possession of the Palatinate. But, though the march was to be made 'vivement', Desaix, once over, gave his men two days' rest before he started, and he did not arrive at Strasbourg till the 24th October. He had been given the option of moving farther down on Mannheim or of remaining at Strasbourg, in which latter case he was to take command and direct the defence there. It was probably the bad state of the works defending Kehl that made Desaix halt at Strasbourg, but he sent on Oudinot with two infantry and one cavalry regiment and a horse-artillery battery to Landau, which caused the Austrians near there to draw back on Speyer.¹

The same night, the 20th October, Moreau, thus weakened, began his retreat up the river, hoping that the enemy, alarmed by the movement of Desaix below them, would not follow him

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 31-2, 232-3 ; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 115 ; Nollet, 15.

in force, and that he could hold on the right bank in the strong position of Schliengen until Desaix could debouch from Kehl and so presumably recall the Archduke. The first step in the withdrawal was very dangerous and difficult, for both Saint-Cyr and Ferino had to pass through Freiburg, and if the enemy could have cut in between them, or have driven one on the town before the other had passed through, the situation might have been desperate. The Archduke, however, although he speaks of his own activity,¹ did not really press the retiring body; indeed he once more weakened himself by detaching six battalions and two cavalry regiments to reinforce the blockade of Kehl, whose garrison had made a sortie. On the 22nd October Moreau stood at Schliengen.² With his two corps, the centre (Saint-Cyr), right wing (Ferino), and his reserve, he had thirty-nine battalions and sixty-four weak squadrons, while the Archduke had thirty-four and a half battalions and seventy-eight squadrons, not including on either side the troops facing one another in the Villes Forestières.³ This comparison makes the conduct of the Archduke in detaching a force to Kehl the more remarkable. If Moreau really intended to stand here, it is strange that he should have sent his trains across the river behind him by Huningue.

On the 24th October 1796 the Archduke attacked the French as they stood between the hills and the river, Saint-Cyr on the left, Ferino on the right. The weight of the attack fell on Ferino, and the enemy made some progress, but not enough to affect the main strength of the position, where the divisions of Saint-Cyr, strongly posted and with well-served artillery, beat off the attempts on them. They had been attacked by the 'corps of Condé', which engaged Nansouty's cavalry brigade on Saint-Cyr's left: Condé himself, while supervising his artillery, saw an engineer officer killed at his side, and his secretary was hit. During the night Moreau again retired, and from the afternoon of the 25th to the morning of the 26th, his troops, unshod, in rags, and in many cases having nothing but their belts to show they were soldiers, passed across the bridge of Huningue. They were, however, no beaten mob, and their proud carriage showed

¹ Archduke Charles, iii. 270.

² A little south of Mülheim, Vogel, xxv; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv, Map p. 35.

³ Ibid., 2, 34-5, and Table 82, omitting the left wing, Desaix, and Tharreau's brigade of the right wing.

they had not known defeat. The column with the trains, which had moved by the Villes Forestières, and had crossed the Rhine at Rheinfelden, now rejoined. The best proof of the army's being unshaken was that the enemy made no real attempt on it, and the Archduke, halting short of Huningue, pursued only part of the way with his advanced-guard. Thus, says Saint-Cyr, ended this retreat of forty-seven days, begun on the 10th September at Pfaffenhofen, and finished on the 26th October at Huningue.¹

The army was not yet at the end of its labours. The Archduke, having now driven both French armies over the Rhine, thought it time to reinforce the Austrians in Italy and to save Mantua, long blockaded by Bonaparte. He did not wish to undertake the capture of Kehl and Huningue, or to draw back, leaving the French able to debouch on the right bank, and he was therefore glad to receive from Moreau a proposal for an armistice, which would have enabled him to go into winter quarters and to detach troops by the Tyrol into Italy. While transmitting this proposal to Vienna, he began sending 10,000 men to Italy, but his Government ordered him to recall them and to capture Kehl and Huningue. He therefore collected a force of 29,000 infantry and 5,900 cavalry under Latour, to besiege Kehl,² where Desaix was now reinforced by Saint-Cyr's corps. Ferino's wing was left to guard Huningue, which the Austrians also attacked. Before he had advanced into Germany, Moreau had ordered the proper fortification of Kehl, but, unlike Napoleon, he had forgotten the works during his campaign, and equal indifference had been shown by the local authorities, so that the fortifications were now in a wretched state. Saint-Cyr disliked the plan of defending them, but Desaix threw himself into the task with great ardour and succeeded, as his comrade says, in making them less bad.³ General Davout, who had been a prisoner on parole in France since the surrender of Mannheim on the 21st November 1795, had now rejoined the army, and led a brigade in the division of Ambert, one of the three defending Kehl.⁴ He

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 27-40; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 81-9; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 169-77; Archduke Charles, iii. 260-80; Bittard des Portes, 310-14. Plan of Schliengen, see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 35; *Vict. et Conq.*, vii. 171.

² Archduke Charles, iii. 283-90, 298.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 58-66, 234-5. For plan of works see Musset-Pathay, Plate XIX.

⁴ Vigier, i. 58-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv, Table 83.

may have taken part in the last days of the retreat, but there is no record of this.

Many undetermined men are apt to recur to the very plans they have abandoned when most able to carry them out, and now Moreau proposed to throw the army once more over to the right bank. Saint-Cyr, in an interview at Strasbourg, was of opinion that this should not be done unless the enemy first weakened himself by detaching a force to Italy. It was one thing to ask the troops to remain on the right bank after the retreat, for, whatever their sufferings, they would understand that they were keeping ground they had gained. But to re-cross the river now would be the most bitter criticism of the abandonment of the right bank, and would render useless the marches, the combats, and the last sufferings the troops had undergone. Further, while the Archduke was retaining all his troops, Moreau had orders to detach a division to Italy. Although Saint-Cyr's influence with his commander was decreasing, Moreau saw the truth of this advice. Then, however, he fell back on another plan—to make a great sortie and destroy the works raised by the enemy for the siege. To this also Saint-Cyr objected, as he did not think that any great success could be obtained, whilst the troops must suffer much in retreating under the fire of the enemy's guns. Believing that his opposition had been successful, Saint-Cyr now obtained leave of absence in order to recover his health, which had been injured by the labours of the campaign. Desaix remained in charge of the defence of Kehl, and Ferino of that of Huningue.¹

Whilst Moreau, Desaix, Saint-Cyr, Davout, and Savary were engaged at Kehl, Oudinot with his brigade had gradually worked down the left bank, until on the 7th November he threw the enemy's troops from Mannheim back into their entrenchments at Oggersheim.² Here he remained until Sainte-Suzanne, sent to command in the district, drew him back on the 14th November on Speyer, where he stayed until the 23rd January 1797. On the re-organization of the army he joined the 5th Division (Ambert) at Grünstadt.³ The left wing had been stretched out down the river to link with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'.

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 67–72.

² Close to, and west of, Mannheim.

³ North-west of Frankenthal and of Mannheim. Nollet, 15–16; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 92.

That army, throughout the whole of the last operations in the retreat of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and during the struggle for its *têtes-de-pont*, had lain quiet, although an advance up the right bank, on which it still held Düsseldorf and Neuwied, would have called off the Archduke from his prey. But Jourdan's successor, Beurnonville, could only shriek and lament when called on to move.

Hitherto I have merely alluded to the resignation of Jourdan, but some explanation of the circumstances under which it was made and of the results that followed it is now required.

In the first days of the retreat, when Jourdan had struggled through the hills between the Naab and the Regnitz, he had written angrily to the Directory that he would not return to such a country without formal orders.¹ In a calmer moment, realizing the shock his army had received from the defeat at Würzburg and the retreat from Schweinfurt, he wrote: 'As, in accepting the command-in-chief of an army, I have never had any other ambition than to serve my country as well as my feeble talents permitted and for as long as I believed I could do so with advantage, I must warn you that the good of the service requires that I should cease to command the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, because I have lost the confidence of the Generals, who doubtless do not believe me capable of being their chief. I think, however, that they render justice to my probity, to my zeal, and to my goodwill; and that on these points I have all their esteem. You will feel, Citizen Directors, that, having lost the confidence of the Generals, I shall lose that of individual officers, and then that of the soldiers; it is then urgent that you should recall me, and that you should give the army a chief who can obtain its confidence by his military talents: I think the Generals would see General Kléber at their head with pleasure.'²

So many Generals are certain that the good of the service and the welfare of the country require their being entrusted with any and every command, that it is refreshing to read so frank a letter. Still, it is difficult not to suspect a little mild malice in the suggestion about Kléber. No doubt a great part of the army would have liked to see Kléber take command, but that General

¹ Michaud, 68-305.

² Ney, 171.

would have been, nay soon was, indignant at the idea of being entrusted with powers the exercise of which by others he passed his life in criticizing.

Later on, Jourdan wrote again to the Directory: 'For five years I have had the honour of serving the Republic in different ranks. . . . I do not know by what chance I was raised in succession to the ranks of General of Brigade and of Commander-in-Chief. . . . I have always declared that I was not fit to hold so important a post. . . . I have worked day and night to instruct myself, and I have tried to make up for the limitations of my experience by showing great activity. . . . I shall occupy myself in my retirement in studying the art of war . . . and when, in addition to the practical experience of five very active campaigns, I shall possess a knowledge of theory also, I shall accept employment with pleasure.'¹ The Directors wrote on the 9th September, accepting his resignation in the most flattering terms. It considered that the rest he so deserved should not be spent entirely in inaction, and therefore nominated him to the provisional command of the Armée du Nord. The Directors hoped that, when he had regained his health, he would return to an army that had made itself illustrious under him, although it had been obliged to give way before a stronger enemy.²

The Directory did not really feel so warmly towards the General as their words would show. Still, they hoped that he would hold at least on the Lahn. At this time they were bringing up Macdonald's division from the Armée du Nord, and, not knowing their Beurnonville, they fondly hoped to see the army under him once more advance against the Archduke. The retreat from the Lahn entirely swept away this vision, and they bitterly resented a defeat for which they were mainly responsible. On the 19th September Carnot, excited by the news of the victory of Bassano, wrote to the man whom he styled 'the immortal Bonaparte', saying that in Germany the *misérable reculade*³ of Jourdan had disconcerted all their plans. So little did Carnot realize the cause of Jourdan's retreat that he represented the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' as having been about to give a hand to Bonaparte in Italy but as now compromised and requiring all the skill of Moreau to extricate it. The fact is that the retreat

¹ Ney, i. 176-7. ² Jourdan, 351-2 ³ *Corr. Nap. Inédite*, Italie, ii. 55-6.

from the Lahn so changed the whole situation that Carnot forgot his own estimate of the strength of the position there. On the 23rd June 1796 he had written: 'It must be acknowledged that the position on the Lahn is detestable, and almost impossible to retain, because the enemy has always the means of moving on your left; thus you should never attempt to hold it.'¹ Still, in time he would seem to have altered his views, for in 1798 he was in favour of replacing the General of the 'reculade' at the head of one of the great armies of the Republic.

There was much difficulty in transferring the command to Beurnonville. As emphatic, but not as boastful as formerly, he wished to command an active army, but he had a secret, though well founded, disbelief in his powers to remedy the state in which he found the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. While as usual he posed as Jupiter Tonans, threatening the worn-out officers with the heaviest penalties by way of encouraging them, he wanted Jourdan to remain in charge of the right wing of the army, he himself modestly taking the left. This, he assured the Directory, would be for the best in the best of all possible (military) worlds. Much to his anger and surprise, Jourdan, who knew enough of war to appreciate the importance of unity of command, not only refused to remain with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in an inferior capacity, but also persisted in not taking over the command of the 'Nord' to which he had been appointed. Beurnonville was equally discontented, but probably with better reason, with Ernouf, who, he asserted, always remained thirty leagues from the field of battle, and who had lost his correspondence and even his order book. Now Napoleon most sensibly laid down that a cavalry officer, entrusted with dispatches, might lose everything to his very breeches, but not his papers. It would certainly seem as if Ernouf was not a good officer, and in 1799 we shall find Jourdan suffering from his acts. Beurnonville vowed that Ernouf should not leave until he had furnished his successor with all the necessary documents, but Ernouf succeeded in following Jourdan to Paris.²

All this time Kléber had been hanging about the army, obviously hoping that his break with Jourdan might not be permanent and that the stress of circumstances would lead to his recall by his old commander. Leaving Schweinfurt on the

¹ Carnot, *par son fils*, ii. 72.

² Ney, i. 174-5.

2nd September, when Jourdan was marching south for Würzburg, he had kept a little in rear of the army, but no call came from Jourdan. From Bonn Kléber wrote to the Directory, asking that his resignation might be accepted, or that he might be given leave in order to recover his health. His own absence from the army he chose to represent as forced on him by his health: as the army was now reduced to four or five divisions, he consoled himself by the thought that his absence would not do harm to the service.¹ Barras, one of the Directors, had proposed to appoint either him or Bernadotte to succeed Jourdan.² Joubert,³ who had been sent by the Directory as a Commissioner to the army on the Lahn, had written from there that, without wishing to attenuate the personal wrongs towards Jourdan with which Kléber was reproached, he must still acknowledge that his absence deprived the army of a man in whose talents it had confidence, and whose great energy was precious in difficult circumstances.⁴ Then, on his return to Paris, Joubert most unwarrantably represented Jourdan as a General who had lost his head in the retreat, and who, now that he no longer had the terror of the *Comité de salut public* at his back, did not mount on horseback. Not seeing that he was really praising Jourdan, he went on to say that the fine army of the Sambre-et-Meuse had lost only 6,000 men, and that the leading Generals of Division, Lefebvre, Kléber, and Bernadotte, still possessed and merited the confidence of the men, so that the army could return to victory. Heroes could yet be made, if the Generals were once more treated with vigour.⁵ Now the wailing Beurnonville thought of casting part of his burden on Kléber, and, after the requisite amount of pressing, that General, then at Cologne, consented on the 21st September to take the command of the right wing of the army. He returned less than ever inclined to be treated with vigour, and he declared himself decided to retire at the beginning of winter.⁶ Indeed, he was influenced much more by a wish to save the army from the entire dissolution which seemed imminent under Beurnonville, than from any idea of pleasing his new commander. Jourdan may have had some

¹ *Pajol*, i. 362-5; *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 242.

² Barras, ii. 223-4, but this may refer to a later period.

³ Not the General.

⁴ *Pajol*, *Kléber*, 243.

⁵ Barras, ii. 214.

⁶ *Pajol*, i. 368.

mild satisfaction in thinking of the probable future relations of his successor with his late subordinate, if such a term could ever be applied to Kléber. If Carnot was right, the army was soon regretting Jourdan and detesting Kléber,¹ each probably having a party of his own.

Beurnonville might bluster and hector over the army, but he was wretched, and was engaged in much the same struggle with the Government as he himself in 1792, and Hoche in 1794, had had about the expedition on Trèves with the Armée de la Moselle. The Directory would not recognize the fact that the army was destitute of everything: it was hard enough for it to live, impossible to move, without trains. 'Its reverses', Kléber told them, 'cannot be attributed to the battles it has delivered, but, naked, unfed, what can the bravest man do?'² It was famine that caused the insubordination which ran through its ranks. Repair all these evils, and the army, said Kléber, would attack its enemies again. At a time when it had not a wagon for the transport of its wounded, hardly a quarter of the horses required for the artillery, not a spare boat for the communications on the Moselle and Rhine, the Directory was urging Beurnonville to march back to the Lahn, and even to the Regnitz. 'The Lahn'! cried poor Beurnonville, yes, he might try that if he got bread and transport with which to cross the desert between him and it; but, as for the Regnitz! 'Nominate Kléber, nominate Schérer or Hoche, you will break me down, if you persist in imposing that painful pilgrimage on me.'³

If Jourdan would not be the shield behind which Beurnonville might play at commanding, why should not Kléber be used, or, better still, why not make Kléber the commander, and let Beurnonville go back to the tranquil 'Nord'? The Directory agreed, and on the 12th October appointed Kléber to take the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', while Beurnonville was to return to the 'Nord'.⁴ Of course Kléber, consistent on that point, refused the command and, when Beurnonville pressed him to accept, he did not lose the opportunity for a sneer at his helpless commander. Perhaps, he admitted, he could command one or two divisions; then, looking maliciously at Beurnonville, he said the post of Commander-in-Chief 'requires a man who unites to

¹ Barras, ii. 257 (Dec. 21-6th, 1796).

³ Ney, i. 185.

² Pajol, *Kléber*, 246-50.

⁴ Pajol, *Kléber*, 245.

the talents of a skilful captain those of an excellent administrator, and yet more, under actual circumstances, a creative genius. I am only a soldier. To put into the conduct of your operations the audacity, the intrepidity, that sometimes bring success, it suffices to be sincerely attached to your duties ; but to combine them, to make all the elements that render them almost infallible move in concert, you must be a great man, a man truly privileged by Nature.'¹ Poor Beurnonville winced, but could not escape the burden of command.

What a thorn was Kléber in the side of Beurnonville is shown by the anger of the latter when on the 23rd October Moreau wrote to congratulate Kléber on the news that he had been offered the command of the army. Beurnonville saw in this a criticism of his own inaction, and he accused Moreau of injuring him with the Directory and of putting himself forward by promising victories impossible to gain. Moreau did his best to excuse himself, but the incident showed how little likely the two commanders were to act together.²

As regards the position of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', the left wing now consisted of Macdonald's division (which had been brought from the 'Nord'), Lefebvre's, Grenier's, and Desjardins'.³ Desjardins had succeeded to Castilverd, who had been disgraced. The wing was commanded by Macdonald, although he was junior in rank to Lefebvre : it held Düsseldorf, Neuwied, and the right bank of the Rhine as far as the Wupper, or rather as far as Ney with a corps of *flanqueurs* could push from Solingen. The remainder of the army held the left bank from Mayence downwards. There was a good deal of fighting, and on the 20th-21st October the Austrians made a determined attack on Neuwied, but were beaten off by Kléber with a loss of 4,000 men.⁴

As for giving any assistance to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in its struggle to retain its bridge-heads, Beurnonville had all the objections a commander can have to weakening himself for the advantage of another army. Yet undoubtedly the best way of

¹ Ibid., 246 ; Ney, i. 186. I combine the speech of Kléber to Beurnonville with his letter to the Directory, for the sake of the lesson. ² Longy, 12-13.

³ Macdonald had 10,350 men ; Desjardins 8,830, *Revue Historique*, Juin 1905, 445-6. We have met Desjardins before Charleroi in 1794.

⁴ For all details of this period see *Pajol*, i. 367-411 ; Bricard, 248-53 ; Vogel, xvii.

saving Kehl was to debouch on the right bank of the Rhine, and the Archduke believed that a crossing below Strasbourg would have destroyed his weak detachments along the river, and would have forced him to raise the siege.¹ Moreau at one time thought of such a movement, and naturally enough asked to be reinforced by some 20,000 to 30,000 men from the inactive 'Sambre-et-Meuse', remarking that the Archduke had owed his success to his being able to draw troops from one or other of his wings or armies. Beurnonville remained firmly determined to do nothing, and refused to send a detachment.

Meantime the siege of Kehl went on. Whether urged to it by Desaix or not, Moreau had not really abandoned the idea of a sortie, and on the 22nd November 16,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry poured out of Kehl under Desaix's command, and accompanied by Moreau himself. Davout is not mentioned as with this force. At first the French were completely successful and even for a moment got possession of the park of the besiegers, but did not destroy the ammunition and stores, the loss of which would have been fatal to the siege. Lecourbe with one column pierced the line of the enemy and got his cavalry into their camp. Then the Austrian reserves came up, and a fog, which had hitherto assisted the advance of the French, now hid much of the ground from them. Finally they had to retreat, taking with them eight captured guns and 800 prisoners, and having spiked many of the enemy's pieces, but themselves suffering heavily from the fire of the Austrian artillery, until they reached the bridges over the river: altogether they lost 3,000 men. Moreau had his head grazed by a ball which passed through his hat, and Desaix had his horse killed under him and received a blow on his leg. The Archduke admits that luck in some matters had been against the French, but the account reads as if Moreau had not struck with his full force, and had not been certain of his objective.²

The result of this sortie was to depress the men, and even Desaix lost confidence so much that he got Moreau to recall Saint-Cyr and to divide the command between them, after

¹ Archduke Charles, iii. 312; Longy, 14-15, 29.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 72-7, Atlas xiv; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix. 209-11; Musset-Pathay, 547-8; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 12-14; Archduke Charles, iii. 209-11 and Atlas ix, and *Explication*.

which they relieved one another every five days, the troops being changed, some every two, others every three, days. Amongst the officers specially employed were Lecourbe, Davout, and Eblé (who commanded the artillery, and who was to sacrifice his life to save the army at the Beresina). It was now that Davout began his friendship with Desaix, which was to have such an important influence on his career. The badly-clothed men suffered much in crossing and re-crossing the river under the fire of the enemy, and the shifts, intended to relieve them, consumed much time and involved much marching. Austrian sympathizers in Strasbourg communicated information to the besiegers, and Saint-Cyr believed that Pichegru, who was now there, was in treacherous communication with the enemy.¹ The Austrian works steadily advanced, although the Archduke testified that the French defended themselves valiantly: 'No work was taken before it had been surrounded with trenches and attacked by main force; in a word, they did all that could be hoped for from a brave garrison.' Yet Moreau never made any demonstrations to draw off the enemy from the siege.²

Now came a marvellous act on the part of Beurnonville. Whilst Moreau and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' were struggling to retain their hold on the right bank at Kehl and Breisach, Beurnonville on the 9th December 1796 concluded an armistice for his army, by which Neuwied was neutralized, and the French withdrew their artillery from the right bank, keeping only a small garrison in the *tête-de-pont*. Well might the Archduke Charles say that this was one of the events of the campaign most difficult to understand and one of the capital faults committed by the French. The natural result was that the Austrians sent thirteen battalions to reinforce their army besieging Kehl. It must be remembered that, while Beurnonville was concluding this armistice, his army was in touch with that of Moreau. Bonaparte complained that he was abandoned by the armies on the Rhine, but he was at a distance, while here Beurnonville and Moreau were side by side.³

It must be allowed that Beurnonville was not alone in thinking that his army could do nothing of importance. Although Kléber's whims rather complicated matters respecting the command of

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 66-7, 83.

² Archduke Charles, iii. 310.

³ Longy, 28-9, 66.

the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', being in charge of the right wing, he had matters pretty much his own way; for instance, we find him writing to Moreau, explaining the state of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and how impossible it was for it to march to the support of the sister force. The Generals, he said, were ready to obey Beurnonville, for the rather peculiar reason that they knew he would not require them to do anything impossible, that is to say, we may suppose, anything Kléber did not approve of. He was, of course, pressing the Government to let him retire, not always taking the trouble to do so through Beurnonville. Even a reported threat of the Directory to arrest all Generals of the army who resigned did not affect his determination to go without pension, to live on his own talents and industry. Then on the 14th December the unfortunate Beurnonville, in ill health and, we may be sure, sick of Kléber, handed over the command to him temporarily, so that for a time there were two commanders, Beurnonville, who nominally directed both the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Nord', and Kléber, who really commanded the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', but who at once requested to be informed to what officer he should, in his turn, hand over the command. The Directors, apparently at their wit's end for Generals, now hit on the idea of including the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in Moreau's command, and on the 25th December placed that army temporarily under him. This appointment Kléber professed to find an 'agréable nouvelle', and he even suggested that he himself should remain until the 15th January at his post in order to make the acquaintance of Moreau. Beurnonville, for his part, not even now knowing his Kléber, hoped he could induce him to take the command of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse': if so, and if Desaix were to command the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and Moreau to be in supreme command of both armies, then, 'aided by such celebrated men, we cannot fail to renew our triumphs'.¹ Both Desaix and Kléber, however, declined these appointments; Kléber's resignation, indeed, had already been accepted. On the 26th December Beurnonville, who, however absurd in some aspects, had brains enough, considered that Kléber had formed a faction with Lefebvre and Bernadotte (Colaud was in rear) too strong for him to handle. 'General Kléber', he told the War

¹ *Revue Historique*, Juin 1905, 478; Pajol, *Kléber*, 253-61.

² Longy, 64-87.

Minister with much truth, 'has real talent ; but it would be difficult to find a man more vain, more whimsical, and who likes more to dominate. I consider him as little fit for subordination.' But, as Kléber knew how to exact obedience to himself, the worthy Beurnonville had attempted to get him to take the post of commander.¹ Unwilling to obey, refusing to command, Kléber was always the same.

Moreau still thought of crossing to the right bank of the Rhine, but the Directory, accepting the statements of Beurnonville as to the impossibility of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse's' doing anything, ordered Moreau to confine himself to the defence of Kehl and Huningue, not undertaking serious operations on the right bank, but making demonstrations there, and even, if possible, getting a footing at Breisach.² For these operations he was to depend on the help of Beurnonville, from whom he knew he could expect nothing. From this time Moreau seems to have abandoned all real hope of retaining Kehl. He knew of the intention of the Directory to send a body of troops from the two Rhine armies to Bonaparte in Italy, but with characteristic selfishness he delayed sending them, assuring the Directory that, if the enemy dispatched troops to support Alvinzi in his attempt to relieve Mantua, 'the movement you have ordered would render our situation equal to his in that country'. This, although the route for the Austrians was one third as long as that for the French!³ The Directory sensibly enough held firm as to the necessity for the rapid dispatch of the troops to Italy and, realizing the importance of retaining the Archduke and his troops on the Rhine, they kept on insisting that Kehl should be held. Moreau, however, entered into negotiations with the Archduke for an armistice, even when the Prince had laid down as a condition that Kehl and Huningue must be given up. Carnot seems to have agreed with Moreau, and at last the Directory gave way. Between the 7th and the 9th January 1797 they authorized him to treat with the Archduke for the evacuation of Kehl, but their letter arrived after he had already done this. It had at last become evident that the works must be abandoned if the garrison was not to be sacrificed, for the bridge was fast being destroyed. On the 9th January 1797 Moreau authorized

¹ Ney, i. 189.

² South-east of Colmar, Vogel, xxv.

³ *Revue Historique*, Juin 1905, 488.

Desaix to negotiate a capitulation by which Kehl was to be handed over at four o'clock next day.¹

There had been some odd incidents during the siege. One battery had been specially allotted to the horse artillery, which had to be employed, and its men would not construct any cover from the fire which enfiladed them, although they were supplied with gabions and fascines. To requests and orders they replied, 'We are horse artillery, meant to fight in the open field and not behind entrenchments, and, if we were permitted, we would open this work to place ourselves in front'. They had their way, and each morning by nine their guns were smashed, and half of the men on the ground, so that the battery was reduced almost to nothing.² In contrast to this, on one occasion a sortie, duly ordered for the evening, was not carried out, as the men refused to march until they got their pay and boots.³ Then, on the conclusion of the capitulation, the French determined to carry off everything they could to the left bank, and all the troops were set to work. A crowd of the people of Strasbourg had gone over from motives of curiosity to see the works, and these visitors were pressed for labour, no one being allowed back over the bridge without some burden. Even a young and pretty lady with empty hands was turned back, until a gallant officer lent her a four-pound shot to carry over. Moore's damsel would have wanted something more than a snow-white wand that day. At last guns, ammunition, palisades, barriers, and bridges, even the projectiles thrown in by the enemy, were brought into Strasbourg, and the Austrians, when they entered the place, found to their surprise nothing but a heap of ruins.⁴

As for Huningue, the *tête-de-pont* on the right bank, after a gallant defence, was evacuated on the 5th February 1797 under a capitulation by which the French marched out with arms and baggage.⁵ The 'Sambre-et-Meuse' still held Düsseldorf,

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 58-126, 251-86, and Plan, Atlas xiv; Jomini, *Rév.*, ix, Chap. lxvi. 238-217 (the pages in this edition are wrongly numbered); *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 2-23 and Map 1; Dedon (the whole book); Pion des Loches, 52-61; Philebert, 163-5; *Revue Historique*, Juin 1905, 446-97; Musset-Pathay, 531-58 and Plate XIX. The best plan of the siege is in Archduke Charles, Atlas ix and *Explication*.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 109.

³ Pion des Loches, 55.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 60-1; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 120.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 127-38, 287-95; Jomini, *Rév.*, iv. 217-21; Musset-

but the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had now lost all hold on the right bank. The Austrians had paid dearly for their success on the Rhine, as, while their troops were detained there, the final attempt to relieve Mantua had been shattered by the marvellous victory of Rivoli on the 14th January 1797, and, three days before they won Huningue, Wurmser in Italy surrendered the long-battled-for town, which might have been saved had the Archduke been permitted to accept the armistice Moreau had offered. It will have been seen that it was to the Directory, and not to Moreau, that the prolonged resistance at Kehl was due.¹

The close of hostilities at the beginning of 1797 provides a convenient opportunity for the consideration of how the principal men with whom we are concerned had been affected by the campaign of the past year. I take first those of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Jourdan's prestige had undoubtedly suffered, and, while full justice was done to the fighting powers of his army, its retreat was ascribed to his defects as a commander. Yet, if we read Soult's criticisms, we see how much allowance must be made for Jourdan. Soult says: 'General Jourdan did no doubt make mistakes, but so did the Government; its mistakes were worse than his, and it tried to throw the blame for them on him. Jourdan's usual fault consisted in disposing his army over so broad a front that mutual support between corps was not possible. The cause of this, however, was often the difficulties of supply.'² We had no sort of financial resources: formerly the *assignats* had some value, but now that the Government had recognized their depreciation, they had none, nor was the loss made good by cash.³ In Germany we had no administrative services to regulate the requisitions: we had to live on the resources of the place where we happened to be, and these resources were soon exhausted, because the armies passed

Pathay, 564-80, and Plate XX; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 54-63; Archduke Charles, iii. 315-23. For plan see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, Atlas xv; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 56; Archduke Charles, Atlas ix.

¹ For this view see 'La campagne de 1797 sur le Rhin', in the *Revue Historique*, No. 54, Juin 1905, 441-97, and Barras, ii. 269-70.

² Jourdan, 108-9.

³ When the Government ordered some of the pay to be issued in cash, the soldiers got the equivalent of five farthings a day: Jourdan would get about one shilling and fivepence. Bricard, 184-5.

and re-passed over the same districts. Our army could no longer live, except by plunder. This raised the whole population against us, and destroyed all discipline among the troops.'¹ In Spain, in the years to come, both Soult and Jourdan must often have been reminded of this gloomy period. Soult does not exaggerate the disorder that existed in the army. 'In this country', says Bricard, 'the wine they produce is quite mild to drink, but has a very surprising effect on any one that is not careful. The beer is as strong as the wine.' He goes on to speak of the excesses committed by the troops from this cause, and of the massacres of drunken soldiers by the inhabitants. The officers seem to have been almost helpless, though some used their swords on the men: General Jacopin was conspicuous in employing the edge, with results that might have been expected. Even when retiring from the field of Würzburg, a number of soldiers was scattered among the houses, staving in barrels of wine and violating women.² Kléber attributed such things to the lack of organization in the supply services,³ and Bricard explains that 'the commissaries, who should have been feeding the troops, followed fifteen leagues in rear and gathered what the poor soldier had harvested. They were as opulent as the men were wretched.'⁴ Here, as so often with French armies, much was sacrificed to fancied rapidity of movement and to lightening the magazines.

Once at least the inhabitants of a district, who had revenged themselves on the French, fell into a cruel mistake. On the 28th August, as Colaud's division was coming down from the hills for the Regnitz, some peasants came to the head of the column, like moths to a candle. They had mistaken the troops for Austrians, and came to boast of the number of Frenchmen they had killed, and had buried in cellars. The Generals, doubtless those knowing German, questioned them, when they clamoured one against another for the honour, saying, 'It was I, it was I!' who had killed the most, showing ambulance wagons and the spoils from the bodies. Then they died, and their village was left a flaming ruin.⁵

On the subject of the insubordination of the Generals, Soult is outspoken: 'Each one threw on others the responsibility for

¹ Soult, i. 322-6. (Very freely translated here.)

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 247.

⁴ Bricard, 214-15.

² Bricard, 237.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 231-2.

the misfortunes of the retreat. . . . The foremost General of Division, he that before any one should have made it his duty to aid his commander by every means, General Kléber, refused to obey orders and turned them into ridicule. . . . Endowed with much ability, possessing great talent for war, loved by the men, fortunate in battle, he profited from such advantages only when he felt inclined, and it was difficult to overcome his natural laziness. General Jourdan was certainly wrong in letting his authority bend before General Kléber and also before others.¹ This is very true, but one form of feebleness was foreign to Jourdan's character. When he might fairly have thrown so much of the responsibility for the disasters on the shoulders of others, he maintained a dignified silence, and from his account of the campaign no one would believe how much he had suffered from Kléber and from Moreau. It must not, however, be supposed that the Generals all shared Kléber's temper. In a letter written on the 16th September, the young Marceau expressed his wish to return to his division and to leave the command of the right wing, which he desired to hold only as long as he should be under Jourdan. He felt that Jourdan ought not to leave the army he had led from victory to victory, but that, if he must go, it should be to the bosom of his family, and not to the command of another army. Marceau need not have been anxious on the latter score: in a note on the original letter, Jourdan wrote that he was too jealous of his own reputation to accept the command of the 'Nord' under the circumstances!² What a fall was it from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' to its sister force! But at this time the 'Nord' really was an inferior command.

As for other men, Lefebvre's division had been in the fighting wing during the crossings of the Rhine and the advance. In the retreat he was at first some distance from the enemy, and he was not present at the battle of Würzburg, but his had been one of the most exposed divisions on the Regnitz on the 29th August 1796, and his position at Schweinfurt, whilst Jourdan was fighting at Würzburg, was perilous. It was his division, if any, that ought to have been cut off by the Austrians when they got across the Lahn on the 17th September, yet he brought in his command, some 12,500 strong, worn and weary but

¹ Soult, i. 325-6.

² Maze, 367.

unmaimed and with the consciousness that their last action had been a repulse of the enemy. Devoted to Kléber, he had not followed him away from duty. As for Bernadotte, he now began to take a leading part amongst the Generals of Division, and, just as Lefebvre had come in for any fighting on the left of the army, so Bernadotte had borne the brunt on the right during the retreat. It is true that his withdrawal from Deining had thrown open the Nürnberg road, but no blame seems to have been laid on him for that : in fact, in the dangerous position in which he had been placed, most Generals would have been considered fortunate to escape with twice the loss he had suffered from the scientific Prince. In the rest of the campaign he played a difficult part well, for, when each engagement is followed by a retreat, it soon becomes difficult to hold the men long enough to gain time for the retreat of others. If he did share in the outbreak against Jourdan at Schweinfurt, he was carried away by the man to whom he was devoted, Kléber,¹ the indispensable but unbearable lieutenant of Jourdan. If he really did leave his division when his commander was in difficulties, it is the more creditable to him that he soon returned to duty, whilst Kléber remained in a state of undignified sulk in rear of the army.

Soult, as we have seen, had twice distinguished himself by extricating his brigade from what seemed a desperate situation, and he had won the confidence of Kléber.² One is not quite sure that his affection for Lefebvre was as strong as before, but this is only a surmise from later occurrences. Ney had become General of Brigade, a promotion well won by his leading of the advance. He had been too obstinate at one time in the retreat, but he had certainly risen in reputation. Mortier also seems to have done well as an advanced-guard leader, and had been praised by Kléber,³ but it took so long for promotion to reach him, that one imagines there must have been some reason for the delay.⁴ By the death of Marceau the future Marshalate had almost certainly lost a member.

I turn now to the Generals of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. One can realize the state of Saint-Cyr's mind during this campaign : almost always in opposition to his commander, he disapproved

¹ Ney, i. 189.

² Soult, i. 300.

³ Pajol, *Kléber*, 233.

⁴ He was not promoted General of Brigade till Feb. 23, 1799.

of most of his actions, and was constantly annoyed by his irresolution. Desaix, on the other hand, one might expect to have been fully satisfied with his position. While Saint-Cyr's advice had been put aside time after time, that of Desaix had almost always been accepted, his mind apparently being as sympathetic to that of Moreau as Saint-Cyr's was antagonistic. It is fair to suppose that he must have agreed with Moreau in not pressing Latour and on other occasions: at least it is hard to imagine Moreau standing against the advice of both of his lieutenants. On the whole he strikes one as still confined in his views, unwilling to face great situations: indeed, it might be argued that his leaving Moreau, as he soon did, in order to join an imperious commander, was a sign of conscious weakness. Still there is abundant proof of his skill in actual combat.

This may be said to be attacking Desaix as well as Moreau, and Saint-Cyr may be accused of belittling his rival, friends though the two were. Desaix was a fine leader on the field, but there is no reason for assuming that at this period he was a good strategist, and I have already quoted Napoleon's acquiescence in Saint-Cyr's criticism that Desaix tended to fumble in his operations until corrected by the great Master of War. I think Saint-Cyr means to be, and is, fair to his rival: as for myself, disliking Moreau as I do, I am lightening his burden when I believe the influence of Desaix not to have been good. It would be easy to criticize much in Saint-Cyr, and one may believe he had a certain narrowness of vision in some matters. For instance, he disliked large commands, although, in holding that there was no advantage to be got by uniting the two armies in this campaign, he bases himself partly on a principle undoubtedly sound, that no General could then have handled so large a force as the combination would have created.¹ 'With small bodies of 10,000 men', says Sir Charles Napier, 'we do very well, but I do not believe we have a living General that could wield 100,000, except the Duke of Wellington and perhaps Lord Seaton, and (of course) my brother who wrote the Peninsular War. . . . The Duke is the only man among us who has ability and practice united, and he is a phenomenon: my observation applies to ordinary English Generals, and . . . I do not think your continental Generals a bit better.'² No doubt in

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iii. 200-2.

² Bruce, ii. 185-6.

1796 the staff officers and the general organization of the armies had improved very much from what they had been when the Revolution had ruined all the old framework, but much remained to be done before large forces could be wielded by one hand.

Still, one hand could well guide the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' and, if we could imagine Saint-Cyr accepting the burden of high command at this period (and later on it took the strong hand of Bonaparte to keep him up to the collar), it would be pleasant to fancy him in Moreau's place, especially during the first stage of the retreat, when we might have seen whether the strokes he indicated, much in the style of the General of 'Italie' (whose methods he usually distrusted), would have been as successful as they should have been. One thing, however, is certain : Desaix and Saint-Cyr were lieutenants whom any commander might be happy to possess ; both were praised by their antagonist, the Archduke, and, had the Marshalate been dreamt of now, both would have been sure of early admission, though one can fancy Saint-Cyr's horror at the prospect.

As for others with whom we are concerned, Oudinot had shown himself to be what he always was, a brave, hard-fighting officer, with that unfortunate facility for getting wounded which some men possess, and of which he and Rapp were conspicuous instances. Davout had come in only for the tail-end of the campaign, the weary struggle for Kehl, but he had been fortunate in gaining the friendship of Desaix. Lecourbe had been leading a brigade under Saint-Cyr and received praise from time to time for his strokes from his commander. The worthy Vandamme also had a brigade under Saint-Cyr. As for Captain Savary, in judging him under the Empire, when most writers are so severe on him as Minister of Police, it is well to remember this stage of his career when young, gentle in manner, brave, dashing, and anxious to rise, he was ever ready to lead the way across swollen river or guarded ford. That he was valued as a staff officer both by the stern old martinet Ferino and the young, slack, impulsive Desaix is good proof of his merit.

Moreau in the last campaign had won a credit which it is hard to understand. His retreat is much admired, though Hoche sneered at his skill in the art of retreating, and Barras styles him 'the General of retreats'.¹ On this point Moreau is often

¹ Barras, ii. 422.

compared with Napoleon, who, it is said, could not retreat, and the end of the 1813 campaign is cited as an example, for that from Moscow was disastrous only on account of the weather. Imagine Napoleon at Leipzig, with veterans instead of raw conscripts, surrounded by a force of the same comparative strength as that which Moreau had to deal with in 1796 : one may be sure there would have been no retreat at all. Giving Moreau all credit for taking advantage of the folly of Latour at Biberach, we must still ask what, after that, was to prevent his marching straight back without meeting more than a brigade of the enemy? His only difficulty was the choice of routes, and the fact that the army and its trains came back by different roads shows how widely we must take the term 'surrounded' as applied to him. His retreat is an interesting example of the folly of his enemy, not of his own skill. It is well to compare the wild work Napoleon gave the heavy columns of the enemy in 1814 with the way in which Moreau let himself be shepherded back by the small bodies led by Frolich, Latour, and Nauendorf. The really damning evidence against Moreau is the fact that we shall find his favourite lieutenant, Desaix, leaving him next year in despair of his ever doing anything great. Grant that Saint-Cyr may have been prejudiced against him ; can Desaix be said to have been so also ?

Hesitating, fumbling, short-sighted, bewildered even by success, selfish even beyond the limits allowed to commanders, it is difficult to understand how such a man as Moreau can be held up as a rival to the Master of War. Some of his admirers professed to believe that it was only on a regular field that he excelled Napoleon, which is practically an acknowledgement that he was unequal to sudden emergencies, the real trial of a commander's skill. He and Napoleon both came fresh to command in this year, 1796, and it might be urged that, while Moreau's theatre was new to him, Bonaparte had had ample opportunities for studying the ground for his first operations and for preparing for the dash through the mountains.¹ Thus excused, the first blunders of Moreau may be allowed to pass. But the real test comes when both had advanced, and were both on new ground, and when we can compare the slow and uncertain movements of Moreau with the rapid strokes dealt by Napoleon in

¹ This point is often overlooked.

Italy ; now, as in the Castiglione campaign, striking right and left at the enveloping columns of the enemy, then at Rivoli dashing into the strangling loop cast round part of his force, and bringing victory with him ; crushing here, forestalling there, and, when thrown back as at Caldiero, frightening the foe into retreat by his repeated onslaughts on their communications. The advance of Moreau in 1796 was like that of a sluggish tide, which wavers, sways on, then back, and on again, as if it had no strength and was uncertain of its own intention, while that of Bonaparte was like a sea dashed on to the shore and up the estuary by a furious gale, coming on with a solid front, swift and relentless.

One other personage must be dealt with. While the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had been struggling in Germany, the sinister figure of Pichegru had been watching from Bellevaux.¹ Throughout the whole of the neighbourhood, the former Franche-Comté, he was very popular : he was styled the 'général des honnêtes gens' and treated as a General of Louis XVIII rather than of the Republic. His portrait was in every window, and a history of his campaigns was published for his glorification.² His former friends, the Jacobins, complained, but he laughed at the Directory, saying it had not the courage to hurt him. In October 1796, as news came of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle's' retreat, and he seemed to be nearing his object—the removal of Moreau and his own re-appointment to command—he returned to Strasbourg, as I have said, in order to meet Moreau and to learn his views on the position of the army. Having arrived at the conclusion that no proposal could safely be made to Moreau as yet, he returned to Franche-Comté.³ It certainly looks as if Moreau had no complicity in the plot, though Wickham's agents did not think so.

During the siege of Kehl Pichegru advised the Austrians to keep a constant pressure on the army, and he roared with laughter when one of the conspirators found that he was professing to advise the Directory also.⁴ Yet as early as in October 1796 it was reported in the Armée d'Italie that the English

¹ The so-called Château of Bellevaux, which he had bought some time before, in the Haute-Saône, Daudet, *Conjuration*, 255 note.

² Wickham, i. 430, 432-3, 440. Where one can test Wickham's information, it is excellent.

³ Wickham, i. 471-2.

⁴ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 250, 256, 264-6.

government had betrayed him, and that this had been the cause of his removal from command in April.¹ Then we find him in February 1797 expecting that his name would soon appear in the list of conspirators which had been discovered in Paris, but believing that the Directory would avoid mentioning him, as it would be of no use to them: in any case he did not fear them.² By March his correspondence with Wickham was suspected even in the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and it was now that Pichegru asserted that the Directory knew of it and that it was the cause of his dismissal,³ a statement open to doubt.

However this may be, he was about to change his position and immediate aims altogether. By February 1797 he had taken his resolution. Moreau, it is to be presumed, had passed completely out of his influence, and he abandoned the hope of regaining his command, and of making direct use of the army. He would become a political leader. He had declined the embassy to Sweden.⁴ His local influence, as we have seen, was great; new elections for the Councils were approaching; the department of the Haute-Saône, or of the Jura, with both of which he was connected, would nominate him, and he would accept. Then he would go to Paris, where he would certainly be on the *Comité de la Guerre*, perhaps on something higher, and would be able to place as he liked persons ready to assist his projects. If he were not nominated to the Councils, then he would accept the command in the south,⁵ but there he could hardly have failed to fall foul of Bonaparte, who considered himself master of that region. However, he was elected to the *Cinq-Cents*, of which he became at once President, but, whether he were leader of a political party or commander of an army, he always had the ruinous fault of being what in a happy moment of introspection he described himself, 'l'esclave des circonstances'.⁶ Not for such men is success.

Two things are to be mentioned, one to the credit, the other to the discredit, of Pichegru's intelligence. At first, if he was in earnest, he seems to have thought only of a restoration of the Bourbons, pure and simple. If the armies were but beaten, they might swing round and escort the King to Paris. After his visit

¹ Wickham, i. 473.

³ Wickham, ii. 24, 25.

⁵ Daudet, *Conjuration*, 261-2.

² Daudet, *Conjuration*, 260.

⁴ Apparently in December 1796.

⁶ Wickham, ii. 23.

to the Capital in April 1796 he had the good sense to see that this was impossible: distrust of the royal family was too prevalent. The nation had progressed too far to re-enter the bonds of the *ancien régime*. When the Bourbons did come back, it was to a new earth and heaven: the whole system of the Revolution as cast in the mould of the Empire was not merely too well established, but too useful, to be cast aside. The machine ran with a new hand guiding it. In 1796-7 the constructive work of the Revolution was far from completed, but yet it was too far advanced for the people, even for the well-wishers of the Monarchy, to be willing to bow to the former yoke. If the King were to return, it must be as a constitutional monarch, accepting what had been done. All this Pichegru now saw, and he understood the incompatibility of the spirit of the Royalists beyond the Rhine with that of the men working for their cause in Paris.¹ He warned Condé that, if they did return bragging, 'Ah! we knew we should win,' and so on, they would be crushed.²

On the other hand (but here I speak with some diffidence) he seems not to have appreciated the change in the situation produced by the victories of the Armée d'Italie, and he even agreed in the opinion of one of the conspirators that these victories were less dangerous to their projects than would have been defeats, for defeats might have enabled the Directory to proclaim 'the country in danger', and to stop fresh elections.³ It does not seem to have struck him that, if he had been planning to use his army to overthrow the Government of the Republic, it was possible that Bonaparte, master not only of a successful army, but of wealth also, might strike in defence of the Directory. This fault, a complete misconception of the situation, ran through all his plans, until he found himself caged like a wild beast on his road for embarkation to Cayenne.

¹ Wickham, i. 356-8, 369, 416, 431-2.

² Daudet, *Conjuration*, 263.

³ *Ibid.*, 262.

XVII

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1797

(January to September 1797)

The detachment for Italy. Hoche in command of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Both armies cross the Rhine. The armistice. *Coup d'état* of Fructidor. Death of Hoche. Amalgamation of the Armies.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 14th January. Victory of Bonaparte at Rivoli.
- 2nd February. Surrender of Mantua to Bonaparte.
- 14th February. English fleet defeats French and Spanish fleet at Cape St. Vincent.
- 16th March. Victory of Bonaparte at the Tagliamento.
- 18th April. Preliminaries of peace signed at Leoben.
- 11th October. English fleet defeats Dutch fleet at Camperdown.
- 17th October. Peace of Campo Formio between France and Austria.
- 20th December. Negotiations for peace between England and France fail.

As commander of both armies on the Rhine, Moreau had to carry out the dispatch of troops to Italy, for which the Directory had been pressing. Bonaparte's successes had given him an influence with the Government sufficient to make it reinforce him at the expense of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and Moreau was ordered to send 20,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. The composition of this detachment deserves mention, as the whole force is generally described as going from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', which in reality sent only four infantry and two cavalry regiments,¹ about 9,500 men, while the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' sent eight infantry and two cavalry regiments,² about 12,000 men. Two of these infantry regiments,

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 140.

² I make this force consist of the 2nd and 15th Light Infantry, and the 9th, 30th, 43rd, 55th, 61st, and 88th Infantry, with the 19th Chasseurs and the 14th Dragoons. For the march of the 15th Light see Lahure, 117-18, and for that of the 9th Regiment see Bricard, 254-60. Longy, 244, gives four cavalry regiments (14th and 16th Dragoons, 5th Chasseurs, and 5th Hussars). Except for the 14th Dragoons, I cannot find these regiments in Italy in 1797, in which year the 5th Hussars, 5th Chasseurs, and 16th Dragoons are shown as still with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in April, *Pajol*, ii. 28; Longy, 246-7. The two cavalry regiments I trace as having marched with Bernadotte were in Italy after his arrival, the 14th Dragoons being in Bernadotte's own division, and the 19th Chasseurs first in Lombard's and then in Baraguey d'Hilliers', *Corr. Nap.*, ii. 1530, and *ibid.*, iii. 410. The 31st Regiment of infantry is in *Corr. Nap.* ii. 1530 shown in error for the 30th, see *Historique* of that regiment, Paris, Lavauzelle, 1887, p. 13.

however, marched with the column from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.¹ Kléber was still with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' at the time, and he reported that, if the cadres had been full, there would have been 25,000 men from his army. He also wrote to Moreau that he had chosen Bernadotte to command the detachment, because that officer had already applied for leave in order to obtain a transfer to a warmer climate, and also because he was a man of decision, who had a great influence over the troops. No doubt such a man was needed, for Kléber went on to say that Moreau would be aware that the halting-places for the force were provided neither with food nor with forage, and that the contractors refused to supply any, as they had not been paid.²

As soon as Kehl had fallen (10th January 1797), Delmas with the detachment from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' marched for Italy by Besançon and Bourg, and the head of his column reached Milan on the 12th February, ten days after Mantua had capitulated. The Austrians, for their part, waited till the 6th February before making a similar detachment to Italy; then, having taken Huningue, they sent the Archduke Charles to confront Bonaparte, while Latour succeeded him on the Rhine.³ Bernadotte started between the 7th and the 10th January, and marched by Metz, Dijon, and Mâcon. He himself was nearly stopped, for Moreau was beginning to feel the shortage of Generals, and wrote on the 15th January to the Minister to the effect that Bernadotte's return was indispensable.⁴ In spite, however, of the flattering terms in which the Directors ordered him to return, Bernadotte was determined not to do so, and gave no answer until he was safe at Chambéry. Then he replied that his troops and his staff were deeply attached to him, and that, if he left, the men might yield to the attempts that were being made to get them to desert. His health was in a dreadful state, and he had asked to be employed in India or in America: failing that, he warmly begged to be allowed to serve under Bonaparte, if that General wanted Generals of Division and if he would have him. On the 3rd February the Directory agreed that he should be employed under Bonaparte, who himself wrote to say how much he would have regretted Bernadotte's leaving his

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 140.

² Pajol, *Kléber*, 258-9.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 147; Archduke Charles, iii. 326.

⁴ Longy, 401.

division.¹ So Bernadotte went on, to link himself with the fortunes of Bonaparte and to start on his way to a throne in a colder climate than that of the banks of the Rhine. At Lyons his troops mutinied for their pay, which had to be given them.² We have Marmont's opinion of the new-comers from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. Although he was naturally prejudiced in favour of the regiments of the Armée d'Italie, he says, 'These fine troops were perhaps inferior in dash to our veterans, but they were unquestionably superior in their turn-out, their discipline, and their instruction. They had made war in a more open country, where tactics are more necessary.'³

Bernadotte had left the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', Kléber was about to go,⁴ and now Lefebvre was obtaining his transfer to the west, where he would serve under Hoche in the 'Quatre divisions réunies'. We have a characteristic letter of the 10th January from Beurnonville to the Minister, from which it is evident that the writer is divided between his feeling that the army was losing good leaders and his own joy at getting rid of what he considered was the Kléber faction.⁵ But he was puzzled to find a successor to Lefebvre. There is a story that a commissioner for supply, Alexandre,⁶ got Lefebvre dismissed, but in reality he must have left voluntarily, for on the 13th January Kléber was asking Moreau to write specially to Lefebvre at 'Rue Grétry No. 2', in order to get him to return. 'He will doubtless yield to this step, because he loves his men, and nothing but a momentary annoyance could make him ask to be transferred.'⁷ Several things may have vexed Lefebvre: the unnecessary movements to which his division had been subjected; his being placed under Macdonald, whose sleek troops of the 'Nord' gave offence to the worn and ragged soldiers of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse';⁸ it is even possible that he had quarrelled with Kléber, and hence the latter's application to Moreau, rather than direct to Lefebvre. Again, Hoche may have tempted him to join him in the west. The two men had

¹ Ibid., 81-3; *Corr. Nap.*, ii, No. 1503.

² Roguet, i. 341.

³ Marmont, i. 266.

⁴ He had waited, at Beurnonville's request and then at Moreau's, for a short time after his resignation had been accepted.

⁵ Ney, i. 188-9.

⁶ Charles-Alexis Alexandre (1759-1825), *Dict. de la Rév. et de l'Emp.*, i. 20-1; Championnet, 210.

⁷ Pajol, *Kléber*, 260.

⁸ Bricard, 248.

served together in the Gardes Françaises, and Hoche thought often of his old comrade. On the 25th December 1794, when in command of two armies in the west, and, as he put it, 'at the antipodes of happiness', he had written to Lagastine, 'I have been touched to tears by what the good Lefebvre said to you. I am asking for the honour of serving under his orders. I even desire it, but I am certain not to obtain it.'¹ A year later we find him writing to the Directory, 'The Jourdans, Lefebvres, Bernadottes, and all those firm supporters of their country. . . .'² All these, be it remarked, came from the ranks of the old army. Hoche had pacified La Vendée, and there would be nothing in particular to draw Lefebvre to those parts, unless indeed he had been hoping to get away from the Rhine in time to join the Bantry Bay expedition, which sailed in December 1796. M. Wirth thinks he meant to take part in a fresh expedition to Ireland.³

Anyhow we find Lefebvre and Hoche introduced together by the War Minister at Paris to the President of the Directory on the 21st January 1797. Hoche came full of indignation and grief at the failure of his expedition to Bantry Bay;⁴ Lefebvre, for his part, expressed the annoyance felt by the defenders of the Republic on the frontiers at the scant justice allotted to them at home. Indeed, we find Carnot including him in denunciations against several Generals, Jourdan, Kléber, Lefebvre, Augereau, and Masséna, but Barras claims to have defended Lefebvre, 'le brave des braves, the most skilful and intrepid leader of an advanced-guard produced by the war of the Revolution'.⁵ The Austrian General Kray, as Lefebvre now said, was more indignant perhaps than the French at the calumnies spread against the Republican Generals, and declared that in all circumstances he honoured and recognized the merits and virtues of the French soldiers. Kray went so far as to give a dinner to the French Generals during the armistice, at which he had the 'Marseillaise' played. Lefebvre ended by saying with all his honest warmth what had been still truer in earlier years of the war, that the defenders of the country, and the Republicans, enjoyed more consideration, and were safer, at the advanced posts than in the interior.

¹ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 99.

³ Wirth, iii. 92-3.

² Ibid., 201.

⁴ Barras, ii. 404.

⁵ Ibid., 285-6.

It was the attacks and criticisms of the newspapers that annoyed not merely Lefebvre, but also the numerous officers from the Rhine armies and from Italy, who now met in Paris during the interval between the campaigns of 1796 and 1797. It was rumoured that Marceau had said he was not sorry to die: death was the only honourable part remaining for men who had served their country and who desired to be respected. Lefebvre kept on repeating that he agreed with Marceau, that the Republican Generals were determined to get themselves killed or to resign, and that malevolence pursued and defamed them only because it was supported by a part of the Government, which had been deceived. He also complained that a mass of officers, who had not served in the war for Liberty, was now sent to the armies to usurp all the ranks.¹ These complaints were no mere words, they were a symptom of that irritation in the armies of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and of 'Italie' that was soon to enable part of the Directory to carry out the *coup d'état* of Fructidor. Hoche's presence in Paris at the time gave more weight to this feeling, as he had always been anxious to strike at what he believed to be the Royalist party forming in the Capital.² Already the officers spoke of using the flats of their swords, canes, or, what they considered the more appropriate weapon, the birch, on their assailants in the Press; one unfortunate journalist, the Abbé Poncelin, was actually subjected to the punishment usually reserved for schoolboys.³ Lefebvre himself of course launched out most against his adversary Alexandre, who, he declared, had done more harm than the enemy to the army, and who had nearly been arrested by it.

To return to the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', where, not counting Macdonald, who belonged to the 'Nord', Beurnonville was left with only Grenier and Championnet as Generals of Division. To fill up the vacancies he proposed to bring Souham from a local command to take the place of Ligneville, who was ill; Bonnard was to replace Bernadotte, and Ney to command Lefebvre's division (the *avant-garde*). Hitherto Ney⁴ had been busy at Solingen, watching the enemy, quarrelling with the

¹ Barras, ii. 297-8.

² Cuneo, ii. 196, 230, 234, 243, 275, 298, 300, 321, 323.

³ Barras, ii. 291-300, 304.

⁴ He had a regiment of light infantry, a battalion of infantry, and two cavalry regiments (Chasseurs).

commissariat and the local authorities about supplies, and infringing the line of neutrality by pushing out eastwards as far as Attendorn in order to seize the Austrians' stores. He suggested to Beurnonville further expeditions, remarking to that much troubled commander that these might assist the army in passing the Agger and the Sieg, possibly also in reaching the Main at a bound. Beurnonville, though horrified at the idea of advancing, thought highly of Ney, whom one would have assumed to be one of the dreaded Kléber faction and so to be distrusted. 'This general officer,' he wrote, 'intrepid in every combat, has covered himself with glory during the whole of the campaign; he has always commanded advanced-guard bodies and I see no one but him who can rightly command that of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'.¹ Hoche, however, soon replaced Beurnonville, and Lefebvre returned to his division.

Soult also was near Solingen.² He had got himself transferred to Championnet's division, either because of Lefebvre's approaching departure, or because, as he says, he hoped to get some rest at Solingen, where his wife was staying. He does not mention Ney. Mortier remained in Lefebvre's division.³ As for the other future Marshal now serving with this army, when Beurnonville, urged by the Directory to take the offensive, wished to avoid the task, he wrote that Macdonald, 'who commands the left wing, and who is as brave as he is willing, does not disguise the danger of the expedition. I do not say that the army will absolutely refuse to march, but everything is to be feared from its discouragement'.⁴ In fact, in his memoirs Macdonald admits that the army was really not fit to march,⁵ and he remained quietly at Düsseldorf. It is hardly probable that he would have got on with Hoche, but, whether by chance or not, he returned to Holland on some mission in February 1797, leaving his own division to Gouvion,⁶ and the left wing to Desjardins. Macdonald makes no mention of his having Ney under his command as General of Brigade: Ney, it may be noted, became Marshal in 1804 and Macdonald in 1809.

The diary of Bricard and other similar works, such as that of

¹ Ney, i. 179-85, 189-91.

² Soult, i. 344; Vogel, xvii.

³ Pajol, i. 406.

⁴ Pajol, *Kléber*, 251.

⁵ Macdonald, 46-7.

⁶ I think General Comte Louis-Jean-Baptiste Gouvion (1752-1823), Senator, Pair de France 1814, certainly not Gouvion Saint-Cyr.

Sergeant Fricasse, show of what varied material the army was formed. France needed all her sons, and the strain for men was great. One curious instance is given by an appeal made to La Tour d'Auvergne, 'le premier grenadier des armées de la République', by one of his friends. Le Brigant had had twenty-two children: of these in 1794 he had ten left, four of them sons, two of whom were in the army and one in the navy. One of the soldier sons had just been killed, and the father was moving heaven and earth to get back the youngest, a private in the 3rd company of the 1st battalion of the 105th regiment, in Lefebvre's division. This son must have been a prodigy, for, although only twenty-two years old, he could write well in what the father called the characters of 'Hébreux, Chaldaïques, Siriaques, Indiens, Arabes, Irlandais (which is more than most Irishmen could do), Runiques' and all the others. Chinese, however, one is thankful to know, was beyond him, 'as it has not got letters representing sounds'! Three of his sons having been killed in battle, the father thought La Tour d'Auvergne could get this last one, taken in the levy, released. He seems to have failed, and his appeals only induced La Tour d'Auvergne, then in retirement, to rejoin the army and replace the lad. Fancy the rough Lefebvre of all men, who hardly knew his own language, with such a learned private under him!¹

On the 31st January Moreau, pressed by the Directory to visit the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', handed over temporary command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to Desaix, and arrived on the 5th February at Coblenz,² hoping to find both Beurnonville and Kléber still with the army. The extraordinary Beurnonville, however, was off. Expecting Moreau to reach Coblenz on the 27th January, he had started that day for Liège, explaining to the Minister that he would remain in the district of the army till he were certain that Moreau had the command. He himself, as he pointed out, in thus abandoning his army, was a slave to duty. He left the command of the army to Championnet, who took it most unwillingly, hoping that Kléber would remain. But Kléber had heard that Hoche had been given the command of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and he wrote to Moreau that this determined him to leave the army next day. Indeed, after the

¹ Simond, *Le capitaine, La Tour d'Auvergne*, 230-5, 261-3 (Paris, 1895).

² Bonnal, *Desaix*, 121. But see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 299.

death of Hoche, he recorded his opinion that he was one of the worst men of the Republic. Accordingly on the 2nd February Kléber left for Strasbourg, where he hoped to meet Moreau. He professed great friendship for that General, begging him, if he came to Coblenz, to give two sittings to 'mon petit peintre', but the two did not meet until Moreau came in disgrace to the Capital in September.¹

As we have seen, Moreau was alarmed to see so many Generals leaving the army, and at first thought, wrongly, that his appointment might have been the cause of this, and not the disgust produced by the inaction of Beurnonville. He found the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in a very different state from that of his own troops, for it had rested since its main force had recrossed the Rhine, and the gap made in its ranks by the detachment to Italy had been filled up. He complained that he had been deceived as to its state, and that, if it had wished, it might have marched up the right bank of the Rhine to relieve the siege of Kehl.² Indeed, he is said to have written confidentially to Reynier that its Generals had wished to do so, and that Kléber had the proof in writing that Beurnonville, 'par peur', had prevented this from being done.³ It is amusing to note the different standard Moreau adopted when it was a question of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' supporting him, and not of his supporting it. Now came a letter from the Directory, dated the 1st February 1797, and informing Moreau that on the 24th January they had nominated Hoche to command the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. It is not clear whether they at first intended Hoche to act under Moreau and afterwards changed that plan, perhaps under pressure from Hoche. Anyhow, they now told Moreau that he was to command the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' only, and, affecting not to be annoyed, he waited to see Hoche, who reached Coblenz on the 25th February. After a trip through the district of the army with him, Moreau reached the head-quarters of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' on the 20th March.⁴

When Beurnonville could not, and Kléber would not, command the army, the choice of Hoche was natural, and indeed almost inevitable, for he had all the prestige for his pacification of the west, coupled with that which he had earned at the relief

¹ Pajol, *Kléber*, 257-65; Longy, 90-8.

³ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 121.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 301.

⁴ Longy, 84-105.

of Landau in 1793.¹ Except that his health had begun to give way, he was now, at twenty-eight years of age, much the same man as he had been then, fond of declamatory and shrill-toned letters and proclamations, and almost hysterical in his moods. But, although La Vendée was not a good school for Generals, the long struggle in that region had accustomed him to command, and had taught him the necessity for some tact and forbearance in dealing with his officers. Never deficient in daring, he had certainly grown in intellect since his first appointment to command an army. In politics he was always in violent opposition to the Royalists, with whom he included the Constitutionalists, and he had the full confidence of the extreme section of the Directory. Naturally he knew much of the army to which he now came, for his 'Moselle' had formed a large part in its original composition. Lefebvre and Championnet had served under him as Generals of Division, if they did not owe their rank to him. We have seen how high was his opinion of Lefebvre: Championnet was his friend and companion in his debauches.² He had probably never seen Ney or Mortier.

Hoche's first care was to reinforce his army. After a struggle with the Directory and with the Armée du Nord, he obtained 8,000 men from the troops used in the expedition to Ireland, and succeeded in getting back those two divisions of the 'Nord' (Macdonald 10,704, and Watrin 9,403) which had returned to Holland. By April 1797 the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had a nominal strength of 103,000, of whom 78,000 were present under arms, 8,500 were in hospital, and 3,000 were prisoners in the hands of the enemy.³ Hoche formed the six fighting divisions in three corps. Lefebvre, returned from Paris, had the right wing, which included his own and Lemoine's divisions, with the Chasseur division of Richepanse, in all 19,191 men. The centre was commanded by Grenier and consisted of his own division and that of Olivier, with Ney's Hussar division,⁴ 16,596 men. Championnet had the left, his own division and Bonnard's or Legrand's,⁵ with Klein's Dragoon division, altogether 18,564

¹ Larévellière-Lépeaux, ii. 180-1.

² Bruce, *Life of Sir William Napier*, i. 506.

³ Longy, 185, 205-10, 248.

⁴ Pajol, ii; Bonnal, Ney, i. 103.

⁵ Dellard, 76-7.

strong. D'Hautpoul commanded the cavalry reserve, as also the whole of the cavalry; Watrin the infantry reserve; and Colaud the *Corps du Hunsrück*, which was composed of Macdonald's division from the 'Nord',¹ and Watrin's from the west, 20,107 men. Soult commanded a brigade in Championnet's division, and Mortier, no longer on the staff, a regiment of cavalry.² The Generals commanding corps or wings at this period retained charge of their own divisions, the senior Generals of Brigade replacing them at the head of the division when necessary.³ As regards supply, the army was a prey to the worst abuses, and Hoche described himself as in the midst of thieves.⁴

On the organization of his army Hoche had ideas very different from those of his predecessor. Whilst the Republican Ajax had been more anxious to prevent his Generals from forming a clique against him than to place them most suitably for the service, Hoche considered the personal predilections of the Generals in his assignment of their commands. Richepanse was kept with Lefebvre, 'who esteems and honours him', which shows that, if Lefebvre was thick in the head, he knew a man when he saw one. In like manner Klein was sent with Championnet, 'whose friend he is'.⁵ English military readers will appreciate this tact. A horse pulls all the better if a friendly head be on the other side of the pole. For the cavalry the new commander established a formation to which Napoleon afterwards adhered in principle. Hitherto the whole of the cavalry of an army, except the reserve, had been distributed among the divisions, but now the allotment was, in the case of most of the divisions, one regiment of Chasseurs to each. The remainder of the cavalry was formed into divisions by arms—Hussars, Chasseurs, Dragoons, and cavalry (that is to say, heavy cavalry). This system found sharp critics. Jomini suggests that it destroyed emulation between the different arms and deprived them of the mutual support they should have given one another: it would have been better to attach Hussars, Chasseurs, and Dragoons to the infantry divisions, and to give

¹ Macdonald, 47.

² Longy, 244-8; *Pajol*, 14-18; Jomini, *Rév.* x. 72; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 127-8.

³ *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 139 note.

⁴ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 335-6; Ney, i. 194-206.

⁵ Ney, i. 208.

the heavy cavalry some squadrons of light horse for outpost duty and reconnoitring.¹ This last plan was adopted by Napoleon in 1812, when, for instance, he attached a squadron of Lancers to each Cuirassier division. Saint-Cyr alleges that from the first day of the campaign the new distribution of Hoche's cavalry was found inconvenient, heavy cavalry being at hand when light was wanted, and vice versa. The plan followed later by Napoleon, of forming several cavalry divisions in corps, is also blamed by Saint-Cyr, no doubt with reason, as in such masses the cavalry found much fewer opportunities of employment than if spread amongst the divisions.² Napoleon's system from 1805, of allotting a cavalry brigade, or sometimes a division, to each corps, came as a middle course. It is noteworthy that, in the plan for the formation of an infantry division, drawn up by Ney at the camp of Boulogne, he attached to it one regiment of Chasseurs or Hussars for employment with the advanced-guard, besides four other cavalry regiments, Chasseurs, Dragoons or Cuirassiers. This perhaps implies that he would have kept most of the Hussars in separate divisions.³ It would be interesting to know what he thought on this subject after the wars of the Empire.

The command given to Ney, the Hussar division, was a special one, and he was to be the very eye of the army. As Hoche wrote to the cavalry commander, d'Hautpoul, 'General Ney with the Hussars will be charged with the duty of protecting the march and covering the flanks of the army, and, together with the engineers and Adjutant-Generals whom I shall entrust with this work, of making general reconnaissances, levying contributions, and finally compelling obedience to the demands which will be made on the inhabitants of the conquered countries. Under ordinary circumstances I shall employ this corps to make my reconnaissances,'⁴ and we shall find Ney leading the advance of the greater part of the army under Hoche himself. A few kindly words bound Ney the more firmly to this important work. He had written to express the confidence with which Hoche's presence had inspired the army, and that commander replied, 'You will not be attached to any particular division. You will receive orders direct from General

¹ Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 87.

³ Ney, ii. 297.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 152-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 208.

d'Hautpoul, commanding the cavalry of the army, or from me.¹ Permit me, General, to express to you the satisfaction I experience in serving with an officer whose military merit is so generally recognized and esteemed.'² Hoche probably did not go only by the general opinion of the army about Ney, but doubtless partly relied on the judgement of Lefebvre, who knew Ney's work with the left wing in 1796.

The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' also was reorganized. Although it was suffering intensely from want of everything, Moreau had, to do him justice, done his best for it, not keeping it on the Rhine as Pichegru had done in the winter of 1795, but drawing it back from the exhausted valley as far as was safe, and thus not only giving it fresh ground to draw supplies from, but also making it more difficult for the enemy to guess at what point he might again try to repass the Rhine. Dufour now had the right wing, his own and Ferino's divisions (17,866 men), on the Upper Rhine from Huningue. Desaix at Strasbourg had the centre, his own division and that of Duhesme, in which Vandamme and Davout led brigades (15,219 men). Captain Savary had either joined the staff of Desaix from that of Ferino, or was about to do so. Saint-Cyr, changing titles with Desaix, now had the left (21,240 strong), which lay down the river, as the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had relieved the right of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' before Mannheim. Indeed, at one time it had been intended that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', unfit to move, should undertake the blockade, not only of Mannheim, but also of Mayence, leaving its sister army free to use all its strength on the right bank, but Moreau's troops were spared this inglorious task.³ Saint-Cyr had the divisions of Sainte-Suzanne and Ambert, in the latter of which Lecourbe and Oudinot had infantry brigades, Oudinot himself being probably still at Grünstadt.⁴ Bourcier had the cavalry reserve (2,231). The total strength of the army was about 57,416 men.⁵ Whilst Hoche was grouping his cavalry by arms, Moreau adhered to the ordinary and better system: Duhesme, for example, in his division had, with his seven infantry regiments, one regiment

¹ I think that, before the campaign began, he was attached to the centre (Grenier), as I have said.

² Ney, i. 210-11.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 150, 306-7.

⁴ Nollet, 16.

⁵ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 140, 296-8 and Table 85; Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 72.

of Hussars, one of Dragoons, and a third of heavy cavalry. The cavalry reserve had six heavy regiments and one of Dragoons, then considered light horse.¹

It is very uncertain what plan, if any, the Directory had adopted for the coming campaign. Bonaparte believed that the three armies (his own, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse') were to march simultaneously on Vienna. It was important to press the Austrians before they could send troops from the Rhine to Italy, and by the 10th March he was in movement. The Directory, however, had no idea of supporting him at once, and put no pressure on Moreau, who did not intend to move till he considered his army was ready. Bonaparte was calling loudly for some action on the part of the armies on the Rhine that should prevent the mass of the Austrians from being thrown on him. Moreau, however, on his return to his army, found it still so destitute of everything required for an advance that he started for Paris on the 23rd March, leaving Desaix in command. Of his stay at the Capital Barras has given us an account that is difficult to understand,² but Barras's statements, and even his dates, have to be taken with great caution. He alleges that it was decreed that the 'Nord', 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and 'Rhin-et-Moselle' should all be placed under the chief command of Hoche: he says that Carnot informed the Directory that this step had been recommended by Moreau,³ who had asked that he himself should remain in Paris. Now the Directors were already jealous of the presence of any successful General in the Capital: Barras and his clique were therefore anxious to get rid of Moreau, and were annoyed when Carnot styled him to his face the 'French Xenophon'. 'What need is there for this General to be here?' said Barras, who suspected that Carnot had some idea of using Moreau in politics.⁴ Beurnonville also was in the Capital, and Rewbell asked Moreau whether Paris had been chosen as a residence for Generals. Were they Bishops who did not like to stay in their dioceses? Added to this feeling, it was realized, as Bonaparte's

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv, Table 85.

² Barras, ii. 368-9; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 148, says that Moreau went about the middle of April.

³ Barras, ii. 312, 373.

⁴ Barras, ii. 377. The Directory then consisted of Barras, Laréveillière-Lépeaux, Rewbell, and Carnot.

progress continued, that the Rhine armies must move, and Carnot (as Barras says) consented that Moreau should return to the command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle': he did not order him away, but expressed his wish to see him start and his regret at losing him.¹ The explanation of Moreau's stay at Paris is obviously that he was waiting for money for his army, and, as regards his departure, it is more likely that he was influenced by Desaix than by Carnot, for the situation on the Rhine was now pressing. The Directory intended Moreau to advance by the Danube, while Hoche assisted his passage of the Rhine by himself crossing at Neuwied and Düsseldorf, and then besieging Ehrenbreitstein, Mayence, and Mannheim. Hoche, however, was in no way inclined to play a secondary part. He believed with truth that, after its long rest, his army was fitter than the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to take the offensive. The affair of the supplies had been so much improved that he had offered help to the sister army, and it is an amusing instance of the constant ill-feeling that existed between the armies of the Republic that Desaix, while expressing pleasure at Hoche's action, doubted his sincerity.² Hoche now proposed not only that he should be the first to cross the river, but that his assistance to the other army should take the form, not of besieging the Rhine fortresses, but of marching on Vienna. He professed that, once he had reached the Danube, he would return to carry out the sieges and to let Moreau in his turn advance on the Danube, but he can hardly have meant this to be taken seriously. The Directory practically agreed to his proposal: Hoche was to advance and to get into communication with Bonaparte, while the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' was to be pushed down the river to cover the Palatinate and the Hunsrück.³ Headstrong and vigorous, a striking contrast to the cold-blooded, cautious Moreau, Hoche meant to force the pace and to assume the chief role in the approaching campaign, passing off on the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' the waiting part intended for himself.

He would have succeeded, but Desaix was of different metal from his commander, and chafed at the idea of seeing Hoche

¹ Barras, ii. 381.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 306, 312; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 125; Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 340, 344.

³ Longy, 179-226.

across the Rhine, whilst the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' guarded his rear. Although for a moment he did not seem quite confident that Moreau would return from his visit to the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', he remained hard at work on his plan for crossing the Rhine, and, as he told Saint-Cyr, acted in the spirit of, and sometimes under the orders sent from Paris by, Moreau. On the 15th April, the very day on which, as Barras makes out, it was being hinted to Moreau that he should start for his army, Desaix was telling Saint-Cyr that by Moreau's orders he was keeping the troops of the centre ready to act, and that, all being ready, he was waiting only for Moreau himself. There was no breach in the friendship between Saint-Cyr and Desaix, and the latter, when first informing his friend of his temporary appointment to command, told him that Moreau would soon be back, 'and I shall again become your neighbour, trying who can make the most noise and have the most success'.¹ The army really had no more equipment for crossing the river than it had had a month before, but Desaix was so evidently ready to cross with or without his chief that Moreau felt his hand forced and by the evening of the 19th April he was back at Strasbourg.

Then the Directory issued fresh orders to Hoche on the 17th April. Apparently he was to pass first, and to march, as he had proposed, for the Danube, but he was to halt on the Rednitz, or at any rate he was not to go beyond Donauwörth, throwing the enemy back on Bohemia; that is to say, he was to repeat Jourdan's advance of 1796. By doing this he would support the left of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', which had its right at Innsbruck. But now came in the curious part of the plan made by the Directory and by Carnot. Whilst Bonaparte thought that the three armies would be urged on Vienna, the Directory ordered Hoche to take advantage of his advance to press on the sieges of the places on the Rhine. Ehrenbreitstein ought to be taken in thirty days, and Mayence, attacked by way of Kastel on the right bank, ought not to present more difficulties.² In other words, having reached the Bohemian frontier, Hoche, instead of closing on the quarry with Moreau and Bonaparte, was to be directed to give his attention to sieges on the Rhine.

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 122, 124-5; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 160-1, 299, 306-7, 309-12.

² Longy, 226-37. Cf. Barras, ii. 377-81, and Bonnal, *Desaix*, 125, as to Hoche's moving first.

In 1797, 'at the time when Kings go forth to battle', the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' was full of confidence in itself and in its commander, and Hoche already spoke of going to Vienna, and then to Dublin and London.¹ Hoche had now two advantages which Jourdan had not possessed in 1796: the successes of Bonaparte in Italy had called off the Archduke Charles from the Rhine, and also the army now held two points on the right bank, not only Düsseldorf, but also the *tête-de-pont* of Neuwied. Jomini speaks of both these points as on the extreme left of the line, but, as far as Hoche was concerned, Neuwied was much in the centre of his line and so most conveniently situated for his purposes.²

To face the two French armies, which together totalled 142,582 men, the Austrians had only 93,000 men, under Latour, who had taken over the command from the Archduke Charles on the 2nd February 1797. The body of the enemy with which Hoche immediately had to deal was their right wing, 28,841 strong under Werneck, which lay between the Lahn and the Sieg; Kray with eight battalions and sixteen squadrons of this force, say 8,052 men, was opposite Neuwied. Their centre under Staader, 29,000 men, had its main body at Mannheim, with a reserve under Simbschen at Rüsselsheim on the Main, between Mayence and Frankfurt, ready to move down or up the Rhine and so to be counted as available against Hoche. This body had 5,539 men. The right under Sztarray lay along the Rhine from the Murg to the Swiss frontier, and therefore was available against Moreau only. It was 35,252 strong.³ The Austrians held Ehrenbreitstein, Mayence, Mannheim, and Philippsburg, and the garrisons of these places, some 20,000 men, are not included in the strength of their active army.⁴

Hoche's plan was simplicity itself. He proposed to draw Werneck down the river by an advance of the left wing under Championnet from Düsseldorf up-stream, whilst the rest of the army closed round the bank opposite Neuwied, ready to cross there. If Werneck fell into the snare and drew off to face Championnet, then the centre and right were to cross at Neu-

¹ Cuneo d'Ornano, i. 317; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 128; Soult, i. 344-5.

² For the campaign of 1797 see Pajol, ii. 1-33; Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 70-4, 87-106; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 124-44; Cuneo d'Ornano, i. 291-316, ii. 336-58; Ney, i. 192-228; Déprez, 75-84; *Dellard* (with left wing), 76-8; Vogel, xvii, xviii.

³ Longy, 264; Vogel, xvii, xxii.

⁴ Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 71.

wied, break through the forts, and, while part of the force was to fall on the rear of Werneck, the right was to march up the river for the Lahn, to cut him off from Latour and from Simbschen. Watrin's reserve, crossing behind Hoche, was to mask Ehrenbreitstein and block Mayence on the right bank, whilst Colaud's *Corps du Hunsrück* guarded the Nahe from Kirn to Bingen, ready to join in the investment of Mayence when the crossing of the two French armies made the enemy draw back from the left bank of the Rhine.¹

Hoche denounced the armistice on the 13th April, which gave him the right to commence hostilities on the night of the 16th. Championnet, gaining a day, advanced from Düsseldorf across the Wupper, whilst the right and centre approached Neuwied. Hoche's task was made easier by the behaviour of the Austrian Generals. Werneck, notwithstanding his remonstrances, had been ordered by Latour not to retreat without a battle. His only chance was to strike Championnet before he himself had to deal with the French from Neuwied. He wished to draw most of Kray's troops from Neuwied, leaving that General with one brigade to observe the bridge-head and to defend the defile of Anhausen farther back. Kray, however, was obstinate, and, though he received the order on the 14th April, he sent no troops till the 17th, and would not fall back on Anhausen, preferring to hold the entrenched position constructed in front of the *tête-de-pont*. Kray had been directed to employ every ruse to gain time, and for that purpose he had an interview with Hoche in order to try to induce him to remain passive on the Rhine and to let matters be settled in Italy. When this failed, he got the magistrates of Neuwied to offer the neutrality of their town and so to spare the population the horrors of war, but Hoche paid no attention. Then, when the armistice was denounced, Latour himself informed both French commanders that negotiations for peace were going on in Italy. Hoche professed to be ready to listen and arranged an interview with Kray for the 18th April. By that time he was over the Rhine, and he told the Austrian officer sent to meet him that he would grant an armistice only if he could occupy the country between the Sieg and the Lahn and enter Ehrenbreitstein: Kray thus knew he was being tricked himself.²

¹ *Pajol*, ii. 16-18.

² Longy, 265-6, 277.

On the 17th April Championnet, starting from Mulheim,¹ reached the Sieg. Next day Hoche began crossing the Rhine at Neuwied, Lefebvre leading with his 1st Division and Richepanse's Chasseurs; Grenier followed with the centre and Ney's Hussars; d'Hautpoul's heavy cavalry and the division of Watrin brought up the rear, so that Hoche had some 50,000 men against the 8,052 of Kray: his large force of cavalry, 9,000 strong, was most useful. The whole army was now on the right bank of the Rhine, except Macdonald's division of Colaud's corps, left to watch the Hunsrück.² According to Jomini, a statement not quite confirmed by Longy, Kray had actually left Neuwied on the night of the 17th April with most of his troops to join Werneck, but, ordered back, he did not reach the Neuwied forts until 6 a.m. on the 18th, and without him the weak force, six battalions and five squadrons, which he had left there, had been unable to attack the first French troops as they debouched from the *tête-de-pont*. So complete, indeed, had been the quiet of the enemy, that Hoche believed they had either withdrawn, or would wait to meet him in rear of their redoubts.³

At 8 a.m. on the 18th April Hoche attacked. So straightforward a piece of fighting was much to the taste of Lefebvre and his men. The Austrians held a line stretching for two leagues, and covered by six redoubts from Zollengers on the left to Heddesdorf, with three other works in rear on the Heddesdorf plateau, in order to take the French in flank if they attempted to gain the road on that side. Lefebvre, turning to the right up-stream and passing before the redoubts, took that on the extreme left, cleared the villages of Zollengers and Muhldorf, and went on for Bendorf. Here the Austrians stood for some time against the French infantry, but Richepanse swept down on them with his Chasseur division and, routing them, pursued them eastwards on Montabaur, which Lefebvre occupied by night. Meantime the centre under Grenier had a more difficult task with the line of redoubts, which held out for some time, the first assaults failing. Ney, hitherto placed with his Hussar division in front of Neuwied, now sent one regiment between the two redoubts opposite the bridge-head, and with the others dashed in between Heddesdorf and the redoubt on

¹ North-east of Bonn, Vogel, xvii.

² Longy, 276-7.

³ Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 89-92; *Pajol*, ii. 18-19. Cf. Longy, 275-7.

its right. The horse artillery followed and, coming into action against the gorges of the redoubts, blew up the enemy's magazines and threw the garrisons into such disorder that the works were penetrated by the French.¹ Ney, cutting to pieces the Austrian infantry which guarded the intervals between the redoubts, wheeled round and threw himself on the troops guarding Heddesdorf. These he drove back : he then placed himself on the Dierdorf road, cutting off the enemy in the Neuwied plain. Under cover of the resistance of his works, Kray retreated northwards for Dierdorf, and the redoubts fell, though the last but one up-stream was left as a *bonne bouche* for Watrin's division, which was following Lefebvre.²

When Kray had retired, Hoche launched three columns of cavalry, which followed him, driving him through the Anhausen defile for Dierdorf. By noon the Austrian redoubts were taken and Hoche with his centre marched for Dierdorf : there the Austrian rear-guard was struck by Ney, to whom Hoche did full justice in saying, 'He marched on Dierdorf with the greatest rapidity. He found there the reserve of the enemy, 6,000 strong;³ for four hours he fought them with less than 500 Hussars, and by his firmness succeeded in giving time for Grenier's infantry and the cavalry reserve to arrive.'⁴ The enemy was routed and fled north-east for Hachenburg, Ney pursuing them till nightfall. The Austrians had lost more than 5,000 men, five colours, and fifteen guns. Hoche in this campaign never gave his own losses. He had distinguished himself throughout the day, moving rapidly from point to point of the attack, and inspiring his men with his own ardour.⁵

This day, the 18th April, Championnet had advanced with the left wing from the Sieg on Altenkirchen. Soult, leading the advance with Championnet's own division, had a sharp brush with the cavalry rear-guard of the enemy in front of Uckerath,

¹ Sérurier, 14-15.

² Longy, 278-80, 445-6; *Pajol*, ii. 16-20; Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 91-7; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 130-5; Ney, i. 217-20. For plan see *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 131; Vogel, xvii; Baedeker, *Rhine*, 58.

³ It was only a rear-guard; Kray's whole strength had been but 8,052 men.

⁴ Radet, 90 note.

⁵ Longy, 280-1; *Pajol*, ii. 16-20; Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 91-7; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 130-5; Radet (report of Chérin, Chief of the Staff), 89-90; Ney, i. 217-20; Soult, i. 348-9.

but the Austrians retired on Altenkirchen. Here Werneck meant to have attacked the French whilst they were in the defile from Weyerbusch, but, as he began his movement, he learnt that Kray had been beaten at Neuwied, whilst the troops he had drawn from Kray were at Dierdorf and unable to help him. It was hopeless to strike at Championnet and, waiting till night, he fell back through Hachenburg, where he met the troops from Neuwied : he halted at Stein-Neukirch on the road from Hachenburg to Herborn. The French army now lay facing north, with its right, Lefebvre, at Montabaur, centre at Dierdorf, and the left at Altenkirchen.¹

So far, through the mistakes of the Austrian commanders, Hoche had had an easy victory, but he was now to show how far he was from being a great commander, for he lost most of the advantage he had gained. All his plan pointed to the necessity for throwing his whole weight against the Austrian left and trying to reach the Lahn before them, as Werneck had anticipated, and the position of Lefebvre at Montabaur made this the easier.² It was an opportunity for a fine revenge for former retreats from the Lahn, especially as no real screen existed in front of Lefebvre to check him, as Marceau and Bernadotte had checked the Archduke in September 1796, giving time for Jourdan's left to retire. Instead of sending the mass of the army to follow Lefebvre, only one division of the centre, under Grenier himself, was detached for this purpose by Molsberg towards Weilburg on the Lahn, on the left of Lefebvre, while Hoche himself with the other division of the centre (Olivier), and Ney's Hussars (besides d'Hautpoul's cavalry reserve), marched north-east for Hachenburg, to join Championnet at Altenkirchen. Instead of trying to cut off Werneck from his magazines at Frankfurt, he was wheeling his army eastwards on Lefebvre as a pivot to throw Werneck on that town.³

On the 19th April Lefebvre took Limburg on the Lahn, sending his advanced-guard across that river, while Watrin's infantry reserve, having detached a force to blockade Ehrenbreitstein, formed on his right. He now commanded, besides the two divisions of his own wing, Watrin's reserve on his right, and Grenier's division from the centre on his left, whilst Riche-

¹ Longy, 281.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 96.

³ Longy, 282-4.

panse's Chasseur division linked all these. It was here that the real importance of the campaign lay, and every regiment on either side sent northwards, where Hoche had gone to meet Championnet, was so much wasted, whilst eastwards lay the path to success. Had the Austrians acted differently, a stroke might have been delivered at Lefebvre: indeed, the very night he reached Limburg the Austrian reserve under Simbschen, 5,539 strong, detached too late by Latour, arrived within a league of that town, but, finding Lefebvre in possession, fell back southwards on the Wiesbaden road, intending to reach the Main at Höchst, west of Frankfurt.

No doubt Hoche might fear that Latour would try a stroke down-stream at his right wing, but he was superior in force to anything that could be brought against him quickly, even if the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' did not cross the Rhine. It was only on the 21st April that Lefebvre advanced, and, pushing Simbschen before him, made for Frankfurt. It is curious to remark that on the 20th April Hoche, instead of urging Lefebvre on Frankfurt, was telling the Directory that Lefebvre was about to move towards Frankfurt, where he would observe any troops the enemy might send down from the Upper Rhine. Instead of cutting off Werneck, he was merely to be ready to receive an attack from Latour.¹

Meantime, whilst Lefebvre was moving slowly on Frankfurt, Hoche with his centre and left was striking at Werneck to the north, who was making for Herborn, Hoche moving northwards, and Werneck eastwards. By miscalculation Hoche in these operations managed to strike rather in rear of his adversary, and on the 20th April, whilst Grenier's division was moving on Weilburg, Hoche himself with Championnet's wing, reinforced by Ney's Hussars and d'Hautpoul's cavalry, made for Neukirch, believing he would find Werneck still there. The enemy, however, was gone, and, instead of coming on the flank of the Austrians, Hoche had to send Ney's Hussars and two Dragoon regiments in pursuit of their rear-guard, which was found just before Roth. Ney broke their cavalry, but was beaten off by the fire of the infantry till the French foot came up. The Austrians now drew off, pursued for some four or five miles by Ney's Hussars at the trot and by Soult with two battalions at

¹ Longy, 447.

the double. The Austrians lost men, especially at the bridge over the Dill, where their progress was delayed by their trains whilst Ney charged over the Sinn bridge below, but Werneck made good his retreat down the Dill for Wetzlar, the French following on the right bank to Asslar. So far Werneck's main column was safe, as were his two flanking columns, for Elsnitz, on his left, protected by him, reached Giessen on the Lahn unmolested, and on his right Briey brushed aside the advanced troops of Grenier and, passing the Lahn, reached Braunfels.¹

Hoche's attempt to crush Werneck on the Lahn had completely failed, for Werneck had slid past his columns and was over that river. On the 21st April Werneck, starting too late, marched to the south-east in three columns as before. Hoche once more mistook the point to strike at and made for Giessen with Championnet's wing, Ney's Hussars, and d'Hautpoul's cavalry, intending to meet Olivier's division from Greifenstein at Wetzlar. At Giessen he found only the rear-guard of Elsnitz, which was attacked by Ney till Soult's infantry brigade came up and assaulted the town. Then Ney, passing the Lahn, fell right and left on the enemy and drove them on Steinberg. Here he was joined by Salm with a Dragoon regiment and, charging the Austrian infantry, took two companies and two guns.

An advanced-guard officer, leading as adventurous a life as did Ney, must expect to be caught some time or another and, though he got safely through the retreat of 1796, his hour had come. Werneck himself joined Elsnitz and, finding him so hard pressed, sent him four squadrons of Cuirassiers and some 12-pounders. These, with Elsnitz's cavalry, charged the French horse and took two guns. A struggle took place for one of these pieces, which had been imprudently brought into action in the skirmishing line. Ney's horse fell in crossing a ditch: covered with wounds and mud, his sword broken, Ney tried to defend himself, but fell and was carried off before his men could rescue him.² He had been so long in constant conflict with the Austrians that he was well known to them, and he was received with all courtesy, but later on they hurt his feelings by sneering at his

¹ Longy, 289-93; Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 99-100; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 135-9; Soult, i. 349; *Pajol*, ii. 21-2; Vogel, xvii, xviii.

² Ney, 220-1; Bonnal, *Ney*, i. 106; *Pajol*, ii. 24; Longy, 296-7.

horse, which could hardly be got to move by a strange rider. Offering to show its paces, he mounted and set off at full gallop for his friends, and he would have got away had not the posts closed in front of him. Wheeling round, he threw himself off where he had started, exclaiming, 'Well, gentlemen, what do you think? Is it not true that the worth of the horse depends on that of the rider?'¹

Ney lost nothing in the opinion of the army by being captured. Hoche at once tried to get him exchanged, and wrote that evening to console him, enclosing 1,200 livres with a gorgeous girdle, 'as a slight mark of my special esteem and unalterable friendship. Let me know about your health.'² The Directory also wrote sympathetically that it had 'been deeply affected by the accident which caused you to fall into the power of the enemy. The impetuosity of your courage before Giessen, and the brilliant manœuvres you executed at the head of the squadrons you command, made them feel this event the more. They hope that the army will soon again see one of its most audacious general officers, whose absence the Commander-in-Chief especially regrets.'³ This was to a mere General of Brigade, captured in a skirmish. Werneck was in no hurry to exchange his prize, but on the 6th May Ney was sent back on parole, until he could be regularly exchanged, and Hoche gave him formal leave to go to Giessen or elsewhere until his exchange should be settled. The Directory sent back Major-General O'Reilly, and the Austrians in return released Ney from his parole. 'I send you, my brave Ney,' wrote Hoche, 'your certificate of exchange. It reaches me through the Government. Go and retake your post, and believe that, when we recommence, I will place you so as to be able to receive the praises of our friends and of our enemies.'⁴ He had missed little fighting, for on the 23rd April his Hussars, under General Salm, had been halted on the Nidda, east of Homburg, by the armistice.

Whilst Werneck drew back over the Wetter, Lefebvre had advanced from Limburg and had halted on the 21st April at and beyond Königstein. On the 22nd, finding that Simbschen's reserve was on his right at Neuhof, he sent Lemoine's division

¹ Ney, 222-3.

³ Ney, 225 note.

² Ibid., 224; Rousselin, i. 224, 368.

⁴ Ney, 225-6; Pajol, ii. 24-6.

and that of Watrin against it, to force it into Mayence, while he himself with his own division and the Chasseurs of Richepanse marched on Frankfurt. The situation was now interesting. Hoche had once more missed his stroke: leaving the infantry of the left wing at Giessen, he moved on Lich with d'Hautpoul's cavalry, Klein's Dragoons, and an infantry regiment. He was puzzled to find Lich evacuated, and halted to reconnoitre. Werneck had left Nunzenberg, and at daybreak had marched for Frankfurt, the point for which Lefebvre also was making. Lefebvre found the bridges over the Nidda cut, but he re-established them and crossed the river. His cavalry pursued that of the enemy towards Frankfurt, and Lefebvre was following with his infantry, when he received two pieces of news. Berthier's messenger from Italy informed him of the cessation of hostilities caused by the preliminary articles of peace signed by Bonaparte with Austria at Leoben on the 18th April 1797;¹ he also learnt that his reconnaissances, pushed out on his left, had been met by Werneck's troops towards Bergen.

It is but natural to sympathize with the intense disgust of Lefebvre at his check in the moment of victory. Hoche was good enough to put the matter in this way: 'General Lefebvre, as humane as he is valorous, considered it his duty to stop bloodshed, and consented, as the enemy proposed to him, to suspend the combat until the return of the officer that he had dispatched to me at once.'² This was true enough, but there are limits to humanity, and the vexed General told the too rapid messenger of Bonaparte with an oath that he might at least have stopped on the road to drain a bottle of wine.³ It is, by the way, odd to find him in 1797 suggesting a draught of wine to give him time to win a victory, and in 1812 calling for a wall of bread to halt the troops in their rush home. Some slight satisfaction may have been gained by thinking that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', which also had crossed the Rhine, was equally baffled, but the check must have been hard for the army to bear. In the preceding year it had seen all its labour and success turned to shame by the inactivity of Moreau: this time it was the irritating activity of a young whipper-snapper in Italy which had robbed it of the certainty of revenge. This was the last action

¹ *Corr. Nap.*, ii, No. 1743.

² *Cuneo*, ii, 348.

³ Rousselin, i, 363 (the paging of that volume is peculiar here).

of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse': Lefebvre, Soult, Ney, and Mortier had served in it from its first formation and now found themselves placed, Lefebvre as one of the first Generals of Division of the Republic, and Soult and Ney as promising Generals of Brigade, whilst Mortier, after staff service, was at the head of a cavalry regiment. Their fighting now ended at a moment of assured, but not actually won, success.

The short and abortive campaign of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' need not detain us long. The enemy had made a strong post of Kehl, but Desaix had determined to cross near it, as he had only one bridge of boats and did not wish to run the risk of giving the alarm by moving it to a fresh place. The actual point chosen was some ten miles below Strasbourg, opposite Diersheim, where the river Ill joined the Rhine.¹ All the details had been arranged by Desaix and Reynier, and, although Moreau did not arrive until the evening of the 19th April, that very night was at first fixed on for the attempt, but some difficulties caused a postponement to 6 a.m. on the 20th April. It seems curious that the Commander-in-Chief should have entrusted such preparations to any one else, and want of care in the arrangement of the details soon became apparent. The boats for the first party were late in coming down the Ill: want of supervision made the rowers careless, and the oars, not wanted in the narrow Ill but necessary on the Rhine, had been left in the rear boat. Moreau himself, having waited at the mouth of the Ill, went up that river and found that the boat, overloaded with the oars, had gone aground. Sending for some infantry to carry the oars down, he set the example of entering the water to get them. The first boats had by now been dragged over the shoal left by the falling river, but, by the time the oars were ready, at 5 a.m., the guns of the false attacks that had been ordered had given the alarm, and Moreau was placed in a difficult position: either he must force the passage in daylight before an enemy on the alert, or else, if he postponed it, give time to the enemy to concentrate in his front. Much to his credit, he decided to continue the attempt.

Desaix now began sending troops over, but only a few boats were available at first. The enemy was ready for them and

¹ For plan see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 165. In Vogel xxii the crossing point is between Kilstett and Gambshheim.

his artillery for long bore down the parties landed. Vandamme with Captain Savary, who had just been formally appointed A.D.C. to Desaix,¹ led one party, Davout another, and altogether enough men were got over to take Diersheim. At 8 a.m. the enemy in his turn gathered sufficient troops to drive the French out, but General Davout at the head of a regiment retook it. The struggle for the village, however, continued for long and was fierce. More troops were got over, with some light guns and cavalry, and the Generals' horses. Towards the end of the day the enemy made a furious onslaught on Diersheim and penetrated amongst the flaming houses to the Church, the French retiring in disorder, some even to the river. At this moment Desaix and Davout led two battalions to their right on Honau, and, though Desaix was wounded in the thigh, their success and a charge of the few cavalry in hand restored the courage of the men, the village was retaken, and the enemy thrown back and almost routed. So closed the first day: the balance of success had so swayed that the French troops were nervous in their position, and at one time those on the left abandoned their post in a panic. They were got back, but several alarms occurred in the night.

The troops of Desaix's corps, the centre, were now over: by 2 a.m. on the 21st the bridge of boats was finished, and the right wing and the cavalry reserve began crossing. Saint-Cyr's left wing was coming up the river, as I shall explain, and his first brigade, under Lecourbe, had been sent on in advance and had now reached the bridge, whilst on the right bank Moreau began placing his men, Desaix in the centre, Ferino on his right above him, while Lecourbe was to go on the left below. While he thought of attacking, the Austrians forestalled him and threw on his line the troops they had massed during the night. Their large body of artillery dismounted many of the French pieces, crushing the horse artillery and wounding Captain Foy, who commanded one of the batteries. Most of the infantry broke and made for the bridge, but here they met Lecourbe's brigade, which tried to get them to turn back. As they refused, Lecourbe went at them with the bayonet. He filled the bridge with his column, drove back the fugitives; and saved the army

¹ Savary, i, Part I, 13, describes himself as A.D.C. to Desaix; *Fastes*, iii. 540 dates the appointment 22nd April 1797, that is, after the fight.

from the disaster which threatened it. On the right Davout led two regiments against the left flank of the Austrians, who at last retired after a most obstinate struggle. Moreau now pushed out his troops in fan-shape: on the right Kehl was taken, for the commander of the garrison surrendered it to some skirmishers, none of whom could write the capitulation. Vandamme moved up the Kinzig to Offenburg and Gengenbach, while Lecourbe on the left reached the Rench river with his advanced-guard. Each side had lost about 3,000 killed and wounded, but Moreau had captured 3,000 prisoners, some colours, and twenty guns, besides a mass of carriages: amongst the latter was the famous *fourgon* of the *émigré* General Klingin, containing papers which were to ruin Pichegru and to damage Moreau himself.¹

All this time Saint-Cyr had been coming up from the north with the satisfaction such a man must have had from carrying out a most lawful ruse. His wing had relieved the troops of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' before Mannheim, and the Austrians, who had an armistice with that army, and wished to continue it with the new-comers, sent a General over to negotiate the matter. The commander of the outposts, knowing nothing of the projected movement by which both wings were to concentrate on Strasbourg, sent the General to Saint-Cyr at Zweibrücken. Saint-Cyr worked the blunder to his own advantage and, after pointing out to the Austrians that the dissemination of the troops which he had seen, and even his own admission to their lines, proved that all was peaceful and an armistice unnecessary, sent him on to see Desaix, then in command of the army at Strasbourg. The officer escorting the General took with him the orders to each corps to begin its march on Strasbourg, so that the Austrian passed through troops enjoying their rest, and went on, not dreaming that, as he passed, each body fell into the column that followed him on to Strasbourg. In due time he saw Desaix, who, as Saint-Cyr had presumed, refused the armistice, and the Austrian, utterly misled, rejoined his friends on the right bank of the Rhine with a tale of the inactivity he had found on the left bank.²

Leaving Ambert with part of his division, including, I think,

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 165-80; Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 74-84; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 111-23; Vigier, i. 59-63; Philebert, 167-8; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 126.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 156-60, 311; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 124.

the brigade of Oudinot,¹ to watch the enemy in Mannheim, Saint-Cyr, purring with satisfaction, marched for Strasbourg with Sainte-Suzanne's division and his cavalry; the other brigade of Ambert's division, Lecourbe, having been sent on from Hornbach, as we have seen. The head of Saint-Cyr's own column reached the bridge by noon on the 22nd April, and the rest passed in the night, so that now all the army, except the force left before Mannheim, was on the right bank. Meanwhile Moreau with unusual readiness was pushing his advantage to the north and east. At daybreak on the 22nd the right under Dufour was sent up the Rhine valley on Ettenheim, while in the centre Davout led a column right up the Kinzig valley to Biberach, and Vandamme marched up the Rensch for Saint-Cyr's former fighting ground at Freudenstadt. On the left Saint-Cyr, turning north down the valley, pushed Lecourbe over the Rensch as far down as Lichtenau, so that on the third day after crossing in 1797 Moreau had got as far as he had on the ninth in 1796.² Saint-Cyr, however, was not altogether pleased with the way in which the army had been spread out fanways, for Latour was coming up the valley with 15,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry to join the Austrian corps in front of Saint-Cyr, and Saint-Cyr considered Moreau over-confident in leaving the left wing alone to meet this new enemy, reinforced by the troops that the left wing was driving before it. Still, no doubt the troops of the *cordon* through which Moreau had broken were in a dangerous position; for instance, Condé's corps, which was part of the force watching Breisach, considered itself in peril, but, while Saint-Cyr was sparing his troops in anticipation of a battle next day, the Austrians suddenly announced the armistice concluded by Bonaparte in Italy.³

Ought Moreau to have accepted the armistice? Saint-Cyr thought that he should have refused it, and that the two armies should have pushed on till they had reached the Danube abreast

¹ Ambert had two Generals of Brigade for his infantry, Oudinot and Lecourbe, and, as Lecourbe marched with Saint-Cyr, I presume Oudinot remained with Ambert.

² Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 86 note 1.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 180-3; Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 84-6; *Vict. et Conq.*, viii. 123-4; Vigier, i. 63; Bittard des Portes, 320-1; Map, Saint-Cyr, v, Atlas viii; Vogel, xxii, xxv.

of Donauwörth : this course would have had the advantages of throwing back the Austrians from the strong places on the Rhine which formed the base for their operations against France, and also of securing an area that could furnish supplies for the French troops.¹ So placed, they would have exerted great influence on the negotiations that now began. Undoubtedly Bonaparte had been hasty in including the Rhine armies in his armistice, but he had for long complained that they would not move ; he had even threatened to retire if the Directory did not order them to advance ; he had sent a million to each army to assist it.² Now he told the Directory how much he regretted that the passage of the Rhine had not taken place a fortnight earlier, or that Moreau had not told him that he would be able to cross.³ 'Never', says Marmont, 'would he have agreed to the peace of Leoben, if he could have foreseen this situation.'⁴ Nevertheless, the commanders of the Rhine armies had it in their power to rectify the mistake, and the more so because they had been ordered not to conclude any armistice. But Saint-Cyr and other Generals argued hotly in vain. Moreau was annoyed : he hesitated long, and then accepted the armistice without even requiring the occupation of a district sufficient to support his troops. Hoche also accepted : indeed, he actually proposed an armistice himself,⁵ but he held a wide extent of country and good positions for further operations. Reynier conducted the negotiations at Heidelberg, whither Savary, promoted Lt.-Colonel for his gallantry at the crossing of the Rhine, accompanied him. Desaix remained at Strasbourg recovering from his wound.⁶

It is not quite clear that the position of the Austrians was as desperate as is generally stated. Werneck certainly had only his cavalry and artillery under his hand, but his infantry, though in rear, still had gained distance over Hoche, owing to that commander's mistake.⁷ He must have still had some 25,000 or 26,000 men, whilst Lefebvre, having unduly weakened

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 184-8.

² *Corr. Nap.*, ii, pp. 392, 394, 409, 410, 420, 488. Note that Leclerc was sent from Italy on the 16th April to Hoche and Moreau before they appeared on the right bank ; Barras, ii. 381, 384, 386.

³ *Corr. Nap.*, iii, p. 30.

⁴ Marmont, i. 272-3.

⁵ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 347-8. See also Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 187-8.

⁶ Savary, i, Part i, 13.

⁷ Longy, 302-3.

himself by detaching Lemoine and Watrin, say some 20,000 men, kept under himself his own division only, with part of Richepanse's Chasseurs, some 10,000 men.¹ It is true that his two other divisions could soon have rejoined him, but it does not seem to have been impossible for Werneck to have brushed past him before Hoche or the detached divisions could have rejoined him. It is, however, true that his cavalry was almost in the streets of Frankfurt when stopped by the news of the armistice. The Austrians had lost heavily, some 6,325 men and 24 guns. Hoche did not give his own loss.

The armistice once signed, Moreau found its inconveniences, for, unable to maintain his army where it had been halted in its triumphal advance on the right bank, he had to bring back to the French side almost all his right wing, and the whole of his left, the centre alone, with some troops of the right, remaining where the armistice had found it. Saint-Cyr's wing was sent into the Palatinate and the Zweibrücken Duchy, but all that district had been exhausted during its occupation by troops of both sides, and Moreau got the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', in the absence of Hoche at Paris, to cede to him the Hunsrück as far as Coblenz. This was done by the sister army with much regret, and its Generals would not give up Coblenz itself. The left wing now stretched itself down the river to occupy its new ground, and both Saint-Cyr, who had his head-quarters at Kreuznach, and, presumably, General of Brigade Oudinot, remained here till September 1797. Although the troops now rested, they were wretchedly off: the non-receipt of their pay had led to such disturbances at Metz and Besançon that Moreau, wishing to inspect Saint-Cyr's men, would not go till he could collect enough money for a week's pay: without this he did not dare to leave head-quarters.²

The short and successful campaign of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' of course raised the prestige of Hoche. For much, certainly, he deserved credit: he had forced the hand of the dilatory

¹ I cannot understand why Longy, 303, gives Lefebvre 18,000 men: he had only his own division, 9,332, under his hand. Jomini, *Rév.*, x. 105, gives him 18,000, but this obviously does not allow for the detachment of Lemoine's division. The *avant-garde*, Lefebvre's own division, had only 9,332 men, Longy, 244.

² For the situation here described see Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 188, 193-4, 318, 320.

Moreau by his passage of the Rhine, a step that Moreau, if left to himself, would never have taken. We may be pretty certain that, if the campaign had been prolonged, Hoche would have forced the hands of the Directory also, and would never have delayed his course to besiege fortresses on the Rhine. But his strategy had been deplorable. He started with the great advantages of having his left wing already over the river and of holding Neuwied. Once over, the mistakes of the Austrian commanders gave him every opportunity of using his great numerical superiority in the plain, and of crushing the enemy. All he did, however, was to keep striking at the tail of Werneck's column instead of at its head, with the result that he failed to cut it off from Frankfurt. But the glory of success covered the blots on the campaign and obscured the danger to which the Rhine armies had exposed Bonaparte by their delay.¹

Lefebvre, whom we may take as the best type of the Generals of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', had been on the most friendly terms with Hoche. Before the campaign began he must have written to his commander in a grumpy mood, accusing him, probably with some truth, of being surrounded by flatterers: Hoche, a curious mixture of hysterics and good sense, answered genially enough, 'The advice you may give me, my dear Lefebvre, will always be followed most willingly. You know that your frankness honours you in my eyes as much as your valour and talents. Enlighten me then as to the men whom you call flatterers: you will oblige me? I cannot be surrounded by them, as I have with me only two or three officers.' It was probably want of supplies for his men (whom he cherished as Kléber had said) which had made the testy General attack his commander, for Hoche went on, 'You shall have mess-tins, platters, and shoes'.² Indeed, Hoche always praised his trustworthy wing commander, and on the 19th April 1797 he wrote, 'I have to congratulate myself, my dear General, on the numerous and striking successes you gained yesterday' (the assault on the Neuwied forts). 'They are a gage of your talent, of your valour, and, I venture to believe, of your friendship for me. Pray embrace in my name our brave Richepanse and our other comrades, who on this day

¹ *Corr. Nap.*, ii, pp. 466, 491-2.

² Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 341-2; Rousselin, ii. 438-9.

did wonders'.¹ After this battle of Neuwied Hoche had put in orders that the army had taken seven colours, when Lefebvre, who really had captured them, wrote that he also had seven, so there must be fourteen. 'No, my dear friend,' replied Hoche, 'there are only seven colours, as there is only one Lefebvre,'² which sounds like a hazy remembrance of a certain creed. It must be acknowledged that Hoche's letters, although much the same as in earlier days of command with the 'Moselle', had improved in tone, and he had dropped his coarseness. Thus, in advancing to the relief of Landau on the 16th January 1794, he had written to Lefebvre, 'Du courage, f . . . , du courage, et la République ira son train'.³ Now on the 21st April 1797 he told the same General, 'March, my brave friend, and success will crown your labours,'⁴ though I fear Lefebvre may have preferred the earlier style.

Championnet, who had been commanding the left wing, had now come well to the front. Hoche described him to the Directory as having been his friend for four years,⁵ that is, since the two were together in the 'Moselle' in 1793. No doubt it was at Hoche's recommendation on his death-bed that Championnet was sent to command the French troops in Holland in September 1798, and it certainly was that cause which gave him the command of the 'Armée de Rome' in October 1798. His death prevented his gaining the *bâton*. As for other men with whom we are concerned, Colonel Mortier, serving as Adjutant-General with Lefebvre's division, is not mentioned, but he must have distinguished himself, as he was offered the rank of General of Brigade. With some wisdom, though in curious contrast to the eagerness for rank displayed later in the army, he, like other officers about this time, preferred to gain experience first in command of a regiment, and he went as Colonel to the 23rd Cavalry.⁶ Both Soult and Ney, Generals of Brigade, had done well, acting once more in conjunction, but neither received promotion: indeed, we shall soon find Ney trying to insist on retaining his rank.

Although peace was not yet assured, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'

¹ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 346.

² Rousselin, i. 359-60.

³ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 52; Rousselin, ii. 59.

⁴ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 347; Rousselin, ii. 446.

⁵ Longy, 412.

⁶ *Fastes*, i. 408; Barras, iii. 275.

now had only to observe the Austrians in front and to watch Mayence and Ehrenbreitstein. On the 7th May 8,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry went up the river to reinforce the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and the army remained 71,000 strong, of which force 36,000 formed the army of observation, and the rest were before the fortresses, the divisions being reorganized on the 20th May. The army lay along the Nidda on a line running north-east from near Höchst to Schöffen, and thence across the Vogels-Gebirge to Lauterbach. Mayence and Ehrenbreitstein were blockaded. On the left of the Rhine Colaud (later Hardy) had his corps in the Hunsrück, between the Nahe and the Moselle.¹

Hoche himself took no rest, but was feverishly busy. At first the organization of the country on the left of the Rhine occupied him. The Directory consulted him as to carrying out the preliminaries of Leoben, and he suggested annexing the country on the left bank of the Rhine, except the possessions of Prussia, and Cologne. This Carnot thought judicious, but the majority of the Directors were determined to get all the left bank of the Rhine from Bâle to Holland. So Hoche turned to the organization of a République Cisrhénane, but once more he was given hopes of carrying out his darling project for the invasion of Ireland. This time Holland was to supply the expedition, and in June 1797 Hoche went secretly to The Hague to confer with the Dutch authorities, who were to furnish sixteen vessels, ten frigates, and 15,000 men. 'If my fortune lead me with this army of the "Sambre-et-Meuse" to the gates of Vienna, as I hope, I shall leave it again to go to Dublin and thence to London.' Wolfe Tone, the Irish rebel, met him on the 27th June, and Hoche at one time was ready to embark with 5,000 picked French troops, but the Dutch had no wish to have him, and intended to keep the destination and management of the expedition in their own hands. Dreaming of an expedition from Brest, Hoche returned to his army, but on the 7th July he left Cologne for Paris, where much was in preparation.²

Meanwhile Desaix, wounded on the first day of the crossing, was in despair at his luck. It was cruel, he wrote to Moreau on the 23rd April, not to be with him and to beat 'ces messieurs'

¹ *Pajol*, ii. 27-30; *Vogel*, xvii, xviii.

² *Sorel*, 274-84; *Cuneo d'Ornano*, 317-25, 360-4; *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, 237-61, London, 1828.

twice a day. The Directory wrote in the most flattering terms to console him, saying that, after he had made the preparations in the absence of the Commander-in-Chief, the Republic had seen with interest that the laurels he had gained had been stained with his blood: 'You have, citizen General, while yet young, crowned a glorious career, in which the splendour of great military talents is enhanced by the love of Liberty.' The Directory, it will be seen, could pay a compliment, and all the more to a General wise enough to keep away from Paris. Not only the high society of Strasbourg visited the wounded General, but also his late antagonists: 'ces messieurs', the Austrian Generals, paid their homage to him, while to lighten the weariness of convalescence he read the works of Marshal Saxe and of Vauban, and for relaxation Goethe and Schiller's *Thirty Years' War*. By the 26th May he was telling Saint-Cyr that his wound was healing, that he hoped to be able to walk in a few days, and was impatient to see the fields of battle on which the neighbouring armies had fought. In this, I believe, he was already thinking of Italy. However, that could wait if the war were to be fought out against the English; for that war he and every soldier in the army would do 'the impossible'.¹ He was, however, only to meet the wicked islanders as a prisoner.²

Desaix, when restored to health, displayed a side of his character that astonished his friend, Saint-Cyr. He, the trusted lieutenant and favoured counsellor of Moreau, wished to leave him and the army in which he had risen so high, and to link himself to Bonaparte's destiny. This was strange enough, when we consider the jealousy which existed between each army, but the reason seemed extraordinary to his friend. 'I am persuaded', he said, 'that Moreau will never do anything great, and under him we can only play a very subaltern role, whilst the other is made to throw such lustre, to acquire such immense glory, that it is impossible that some of this should not fall on his lieutenants.'³ Desaix ambitious! Hitherto the honour of serving the country, the glory to be won in the field, had seemed sufficient to both of the friendly rivals: indeed their very friendship rested on the absence of any wish to excel one another in a race for promotion. Still, some explanation of the change is possible:

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 127-8.

² On his return from Egypt.

³ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 190-1; cf. Savary, iii. 13-14.

the effect of the first disorders and horrors of the Revolutionary régime had passed away, and the one-time dislike to the elevation that so easily led to disgrace was passing into the soldiers' natural and praiseworthy longing for promotion, to deteriorate in time to the struggle for rewards under the Empire. Also Desaix had given a sign of what was in his character when in 1791, refusing to emigrate, he gave as a reason, not only that he disliked to serve against his country, but also that he wished to remain and rise in the army. But the point I would impress on students of war is that this resolution of Desaix was fatal to the ordinary estimation of Moreau's talents. After seeing the celebrated retreat and also the very creditable crossing of the Rhine in 1797, Desaix, who well knew the mind of his commander, abandoned him as wanting the great qualities required for his post.

To Moreau Desaix represented that it was necessary to send to Bonaparte, then negotiating with Austria on the formal terms of peace, some one that would get him to include in the stipulations the payment by Bavaria and the small States of Suabia of the contributions in supplies which they had promised when Moreau had first advanced in 1796, and which had been withheld on his retreat. He made Moreau believe, probably rightly enough, that this was the only way to get the supplies required to satisfy the most urgent needs of the army. On the 17th July 1797 he started for Italy with full powers from Moreau, who told Bonaparte that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had not been paid for two months and was on the point of giving itself up to despair.¹ General Davout, hitherto under Desaix, of course remained with the army, presumably on the right bank with the centre. One would suppose that Lt.-Colonel and A.D.C. Savary would have accompanied his General, but, perhaps from want of money, he went on leave to his family and so missed the trip to Italy and introduction to Bonaparte.² It is, by the way, curious to read the estimate of him now given by Desaix: 'His character is very agreeable and his manners most pleasant. Is very brave, extremely active and zealous. Has much intelligence and taste for minor warfare, wishing to succeed in it; good cavalry officer.'³ This points much more to his becoming

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 191 note 1; Bonnal, *Desaix*, 128-9.

² Savary, i, Part i, 14.

³ *Fastes*, iii. 540.

the head of a regiment of horse than to his obtaining the post of Minister of Police!

Desaix arrived at Milan on the 27th July and found himself in a very different world. His description of the Armée d'Italie, full of food and riches, wearing gold lace where the poor Rhine armies had cotton, must have read strangely to his former comrades. Bonaparte paid him every attention and riveted his yoke on him. Henceforth he determined to follow the fortunes of the General of Italy. Starting about the 17th September, he went to Munich to negotiate with the Elector, but he found the Court altogether Austrian in sympathy. He had arrived under the escort of an Austrian officer and was informed that he could therefore only be presented by the Austrian Minister; finally he was told that the dispatch he had handed in was so important that the answer could not be sent to him but to the Directory or to Bonaparte. He then used threats, both in a note and in an interview with the only Minister then at Munich, but to no avail. His personal position was weakened by the report that he had been dismissed by the Directory, and it will be seen that he really had been endangered by the effects of the *coup d'état* of Fructidor. By the 24th October he was back on the right bank of the Rhine at Offenburg, in command of the troops he had had before.¹

The description of the *coup d'état* of Fructidor 1797 must come in the history of the Armée d'Italie, since it was carried out by Augereau, one of the Generals of that Army.² I shall therefore deal with it here only in so far as it affected the Rhine armies. The share of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in the stroke began in June 1797, when Lemoine's division and Richepanse's Chasseurs started to move on Paris. It is a little curious that Lefebvre was not selected for this work, if he were in full agreement with Hoche: possibly his name might have called too much attention to what professed to be a simple reinforcement for the west, while Lemoine, less known, had given his proofs, for it was to him that Hoche had left the work of dealing with the captives of Quiberon.³ Whilst the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' kept its eyes on the frontier, the officers of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' were in as excited a state as those of the Armée d'Italie,

¹ Bonnal, *Desaix*, 132-4.

² See Preface.

³ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 366; Rousselin, i. 410.

looking to some movement at Paris, where they believed the enemies of the Republic would triumph. The majority of the Directory was preparing for a stroke at the constitutional and monarchical opponents in its own body and in the two Councils ; and Hoche in July had been chosen as its instrument and nominated as Minister of War. But he was below the legal age for a Minister, and, cowed by the opposition he found in the Capital, he returned to his army, assuring it on the 4th August of the 'joie la plus pure' with which he did so.¹ In reality his irritation at the check he had experienced and his alarm at the possibility of a defeat of the Republicans in the Capital kept him in a constant fever, which told on his failing health, weakened as it was by his excesses.

How ready he and his officers were to use their arms against the Councils, if these declared against the Republican, or indeed against the extreme party of the Revolution, was soon shown. On the 10th August the army celebrated the anniversary of the attack on the Tuileries, as if to remind the troops of the worst time of the Revolution. First came an address from Hoche of the most threatening character, for his men were told that they must not yet lay aside those terrible arms with which they had so often determined victory : before doing so they had to ensure 'la tranquillité intérieure' which fanatics and rebels to the Republican laws tried to trouble. Next came a sort of reproduction of the fight made by Lefebvre on the 15th June 1796 on ground to the north of Wetzlar, in which his troops now attacked positions held by Grenier and Championnet. Then came a dinner for the officers at the Abbey of Altenberg, a meal, for obvious reasons, 'sans faste', as the defenders of their country saw but little of its money. All the speeches showed that the leaders of the army thought, like those in Italy, of marching on Paris. Hoche's toast was, 'To the Republic: may its former defenders be ever faithful to it ! May their courage, which has triumphed over foreign enemies, annihilate all factions within it !' Lefebvre was even plainer, 'To the hate of the enemies of the Republic ! Fire on the rascals who stain the soil of Liberty !' Championnet toasted the Armée d'Italie, which had been sending to Paris the most violent addresses : 'We have heard, brave

¹ Cuneo d'Ornano, ii. 368-70.

comrades, and we march abreast of you.' Ney spoke in the same style, 'To the maintenance of the Republic: great politicians of Clichy,¹ deign not to force us to sound the charge!' Soult and other officers in milder language spoke of their former commander, now one of the Legislative body: 'To General Jourdan, faithful and pure member of the Council of *Cinq-Cents*! May he give us as good laws as a legislator as he has given us great examples as a General, and oppose to enemies at home the same courage as he has shown to those abroad.' Then a General of Brigade gave a name of which Hoche thought much, 'To Buonaparte, may he . . .' but here Hoche interrupted, 'À Buonaparte tout court, son nom dit tout'.² Indeed it did, for at that moment Augereau, sent by him, was in Paris, ready to conduct the *coup d'état* of Fructidor and to use the troops furnished by Hoche for that stroke, in which the soldiers' arms sustained the Republic, already unable to trust to the support of the people.

When the *coup* of Fructidor had been successfully accomplished, and Carnot, who had checked Hoche when he went to Paris to be the saviour of the Republic, had fled over the frontier, Hoche occupied a most prominent position. In the first days of September Moreau, who had kept back the proofs of Pichegru's treachery, was called to Paris, and Hoche for the time commanded the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', as well as his own army, although he had not time to visit the sister force. He stood alone on the Rhine, as Bonaparte did in Italy: if the commander of 'Italie' had supplied the General that had dealt the stroke, Hoche had furnished the troops, and he had given a much firmer support to the part of the Directory that was now triumphant than Bonaparte had done. He seemed the only possible opponent of the ambitious General of Italy, of whom he had hitherto professed himself the greatest admirer. The greater sensation was therefore caused when, on the 15th September 1797, he died at his head-quarters at Wetzlar, of poison said some, worn out by excitement, ambition, and excess, said others.

Had Hoche lived, would he have opposed Brumaire, and would he have succeeded? To ask this is to ask many questions: Saint-Cyr and Soult, men of very different minds, both thought

¹ The monarchical or constitutional club in Paris.

² Rousselin, i. 408-13.

he would have opposed Bonaparte; Soult believing that he would have anticipated him, I presume whilst his rival was in Egypt.¹ Had Hoche struck for himself whilst his rival was abroad, he might have placed himself in power : he would never have attained the supremacy reached by Bonaparte : he would have acted with men of the type of Sieyès, who, once he had been successful, would have left military matters, not legislation, to him ; and his fervour would have led him away if he had tried to rule the nation. This, of course, is to assume that, like Bonaparte in 1799, he had been continuously successful, and had only to shine in comparison with beaten commanders. One has to make a similar assumption in the case of his resistance at Brumaire. He would have required to be at the head of a successful and devoted army, and before then he would have had to face the Archduke Charles, if not Suvaroff. Then also we are not to think that in such a case Bonaparte's mode of action would have been what it actually was. He would not have tried the chance of the civil war which Saint-Cyr thought possible. Hoche might have been cajoled, as Moreau was, and the task would have been as easy, had he known defeat. It was Pompey's part that Soult thought he might have played to the new Caesar, and Saint-Cyr doubtless is right in saying that 'The modern Caesar, yet more superior to his rival than the ancient Caesar was to the rival to whom they wished to oppose him, would have easily triumphed over him, and would in spite of him have reached the end towards which he was moving'.

Just before his death Hoche had provided for the command of the two armies under him for the moment, selecting the two senior Generals, Lefebvre for the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and, in the absence of Desaix, who was in Italy, Saint-Cyr for the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', until the orders of the Directory should be known.² The dead commander had the most pompous of funerals. After lying in state for a day in a room hung with black, guarded by members of his staff, his grenadiers, and the company of Guides³ which had followed him for three years, on the 21st September his body was borne with a long funeral

¹ Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 201-2 ; Soult, i. 354-5.

² Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 199.

³ Rousselin, i. 437-48. All commanders of the main armies had their company of Guides.

procession from Wetzlar to Coblenz, where it was laid in the same tomb as that of Marceau in the Petersberg. It had passed through Ehrenbreitstein, where the Austrian garrison lined the streets and the Austrian artillery fired minute guns. Lefebvre, Championnet, and Grenier bore the chief part in the funeral of the man who might have been so much had he lived. Lefebvre said, 'My friends, death, which has never seemed redoubtable to us, has shown itself to our eyes in a terrible manner. With one blow it has annihilated youth, talent, and virtue. Dear Comrades, Hoche is no more. Murderous Fate has terminated his days, and in an instant there will remain no more of him than the remembrances of his virtues and the records of his deeds. Let us consecrate this instant to rendering him the last evidence of our profound affliction. Let the warlike thunder which lightened his numerous triumphs tell the entire universe that humanity has lost a friend, Victory one of her children, the Republic a support, and all of us a sincere friend.' Somehow the phrases move rather rustily, but there was probably real regret at the bottom of the stilted language. Finally a grenadier, stepping from the ranks, threw a crown of laurel on the coffin, saying, 'Hoche, it is in the name of the army that I give this crown'.

Lefebvre held his command but a short time, for on the 23rd September 1797¹ Augereau, fresh from carrying out the *coup d'état* at Paris, and now dexterously shunted by the Directory, took command of the two armies on the Rhine, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', which nominally became one force, the Armée d'Allemagne. In reality they were only linked, not amalgamated, and remained two separate bodies, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' being styled the right, and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' the left wing of 'Allemagne'. The mass of the last army remained on the right bank of the Rhine, much in its former positions,² but on its left Macdonald's division from the 'Nord' had again come up and was at Cologne. Lefebvre retained his division, Soult his brigade in the division of Grenier, and Ney kept his Hussar division, whilst on the left of the river

¹ *Pajol*, ii. 33, dates the formation of 'Allemagne' as the 20th October 1797, but on the 14th October Augereau styles himself chief of that force: *Saint-Cyr, Rhin*, iv. 330.

² For these see *Pajol*, ii. 32.

Colonel Mortier was with his cavalry regiment before Mayence. Later still, in December 1797, the former troops of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' composed the Armée de Mayence, whose history is told elsewhere; but from the end of the 1797 campaign we begin a new era.

The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' may be said in one sense to have continued its existence as the right wing of Augereau's Armée d'Allemagne until the 9th December 1797, and then once again as a separate body, the Armée du Rhin (which I call 'Rhin B'), still under Augereau. Soon after the 29th January 1798 this Armée du Rhin sent a force into Switzerland, which became the 2nd Division of the Armée d'Helvétie under Brune. But neither 'Allemagne' nor 'Rhin B' did any fighting, and in 'Helvétie' the Rhine troops formed only a part of that army.

Here, then, in September 1797 ends the history of two of the great schools of the Marshals. It will have been seen that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had, numerically speaking, the greater share in the formation of the Marshalate. Death robbed the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' of one representative, Desaix, whilst Lecourbe lost the *bâton* through disaffection and Moreau through treason, so that Saint-Cyr, Davout, and Oudinot are the only names to figure in the roll, and even of these Saint-Cyr was added too late to play his proper part.

What sort of schools were these armies? If we may be guided by Saint-Cyr, who throughout his life had a strong and touching affection for his army and for its predecessor, the Armée du Rhin, and who wrote the history of their campaigns, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' prided itself on its reserve and self-restraint, as compared with the effervescing Armée d'Italie with its southern troops, or with the Republican 'Sambre-et-Meuse', always ready to let its regiments be used at Paris for political purposes. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' never attempted to interfere in such matters. The history of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' is almost entirely that of the simple Jourdan: the Armée d'Italie is bound to Bonaparte. If Madame de Staël really intended her phrase that the Armée du Rhin was the army of the Republic, she was hardly right. When at Fructidor the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and 'Italie' were bawling their love for the Republic and were devoting themselves to politics, the troops that had been welded into the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' looked on in disdainful silence,

thinking with Blake that their work was with the enemies of the Nation.

Putting aside Oudinot as a mere corps leader, we must admit that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' gave to the Marshalate two Generals of the highest class, and something of the influence of the army will be seen in their careers. No two men could have differed more in character. Saint-Cyr had all the faults of the staff officer. His troops were but his tools, and he expected them to be ready for his use, as he expected his horse to come round ready for work. How that result was to be effected, he left to others. Davout had the merits of a regimental officer. Discipline and order were his very life, and the care of his men his first thought. His stern treatment of disorder, which revolted soft-hearted men, was really merciful to the army and to the civil population round it. Once in the field, the two men had much in common. Both were self-reliant and ready to strike firmly. If they had not the wild dash of the *Armée d'Italie*, they had none of the curious wavering and uncertainty of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in the field, as displayed by Ney and Soult. They differed much in their relations with the Empire. All Napoleon's style of warfare and all the glitter and gold of his rule were uncongenial to Saint-Cyr, while Davout was heart and soul a General of the Empire. But, the Empire fallen, each remained a man and a personality. Saint-Cyr, returning from captivity, found the Bourbons on the throne and thenceforward served them, uninfluenced by the storm of the *Cent Jours*, but not displaying the least subservience to the new régime. Davout held Hamburg for Napoleon: when the Emperor fell, he held it for France. Not bowing to the Bourbons, he joined Napoleon in the *Cent Jours*. It was only when further resistance was hopeless that he insisted on the departure of his Emperor, and himself retired permanently. In both cases we find men of resolution, standing firm. This too while Ney and Soult of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' were throwing their allegiance from side to side with equal warmth, whoever might be the recipient; while Victor and Sérurier, of the *Armée d'Italie*, were quick to overthrow their sovereign, once defeat seemed certain; while Marmont was betraying him. Saint-Cyr and Davout had fought for France, and all the crash of the Empire did not make them forget their country.

APPENDIX A

The Line of Neutrality in 1795, see page 213.

This line of neutrality shall include Ost-Friesland, and descend along the Ems and the Alpha as far as Münster, taking afterwards its direction on Koesfeld, Borken, Bocholt; it shall join the frontier of the Duchy of Cleves near Isselburg, follow that frontier to the Nouvelle Yssel¹, ascend the Rhine to Duisburg, then it shall run along the frontier of the County of Mark by Werden, Gemark; it shall then follow the Wupper, pass by Altenkirchen and Limburg on the Lahn, ascend this latter river and the Wörs to Idstein, direct itself then towards Eppstein, Höchst on the Main, thence to Nauheim, along the Landgraben, Dornheim, and, following the stream which passes through that town, gain the frontier of the Palatinate, to follow afterwards that of the country of Darmstadt, and that of the Circle of Franconia: the line shall afterwards run to Eberbach on the Neckar, follow the course of that river to Wimpfen, Free Town of the Empire, and run thence to Löwenstein, Murrhardt, Hohenstadt, Nördlingen, Free Town of the Empire, and Holzkirchen on the Wernitz; it shall enclose the County of Pappenheim, all the Circle of Franconia, and that of Upper Saxony; it shall then run along Bavaria, the Upper Palatinate and Bohemia, to the frontier of Saxony.

¹ The Issel.

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